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SKETCHES FROM LIFE;

BY THE LATE

LAMAN BLANCHARD:

With a Memoir of the Author,

BY

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

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EMBELLISHED WITH A PORTRAIT, AFTER A DRAWING BY DANIEL MACLISE, R.A. AND SEVERAL WOOD ENGRAVINGS, FROM DESIGNS BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, KENNY MEADOWS, AND FRANK STONE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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A RECORD OF THE POLICE-OFFICE.*

"You mustn't be defacing the walls hereabouts: you're old enough to know better: move on," was the warning addressed by a police constable to an old man on whom toil as well as time had pressed heavily, but who yet seemed less bowed down by these than by some great and bitter trouble. He appeared to have been writing

* The incident here related is not an imaginary one. It is taken from the London police reports published in the newspapers: perhaps ten years ago. It passed unnoticed at the time, or with but a moment's commiseration.

with a piece of chalk some unintelligible words on the wall. On he moved without a remonstrance, unless a deep sigh might be so interpreted.

It was a bleak, raw evening in autumn. Heavy rain succeeding to the dust of a fortnight's dry weather, had had made the streets wet and slippery as after the breaking up of a frost. Thick lowering clouds, through which not a star struggled, threatened yet more rain. Wandering on apparently without any settled course, the old man stopped in another street (it was somewhere in the extreme west of the metropolis) with the same intention as before. His chalk was already applied to a dwarf garden-wall, over which, among some leafless trees, hung a lamp; when he was again interrupted by a constable on duty, who charged him with a design of leaping the wall; a harder task to him of the bent frame and shrivelled limbs than scaling the walls of Newgate would have been to his sturdy questioner. But it was the constable's business to be suspicious, and the wanderer seemed to feel that it was in the nature of his task, whatever it might be, to excite suspicion. Again he moved on as directed, with the admonition not to be again found lurking in that neighbourhood.

The wind, as he traversed the streets, seemed to oppose his progress at every turn; and the rain, which now began to fall, was sure to beat in his face, whether he moved north or south, east or west. The poor old wanderer soon came to a standstill once more. The spot was lonelier and darker, and while the shower beat fiercely against him he had recourse to his chalk, and contrived to scrawl upon some rough boards that enclosed the scaffolding of an unfinished building, amidst bricks and rubbish, a sentence or two, formed in lines anything but parallel, and of letters of many shapes and sizes. He laboured hard to make every letter dis-

tinct, and connected them as well as he could in the uncertain light; but the rough surface would have puzzled an abler penman to write legibly. What he at last managed with such pain and difficulty to chalk on the boards few could have deciphered in broad daylight; even supposing that the pelting rain did not wash the inscription away before day dawned.

Having finished it, he threw upward to the heavens, now entirely obscured by chilling and dreary vapour, a look in which a feeling of hope temporarily struggled with anguish and despair; and the smile with which he turned to proceed on his comfortless and weary way, seemed to tell of something lighter at his heart than a dull and stifling sense of the utter uselessness of persevering.

For three or four hours he continued to wander on, stopping at intervals, as often as opportunity offered, to chalk upon the enclosures of new buildings, on dead walls, or on the doors of outhouses or stabling, words which he could not spell, and had barely a chance of making legible. Patiently did he repeat the essay, and slowly did he labour to give distinctness to what he wrote. Often interrupted, he constantly resumed his endeavour when the interruption ceased; as though unconscious of any difficulty that could thwart his purpose, or of any pain, insult, or outrage, that would not be far more than compensated by the bare chance, the mere possibily of ultimate success in his sad and strange adventure.

As the rain fell without intermission, and the wind dashed it with sharp and sudden force against all whom necessity doomed to traverse the streets of London on that miserable night, few passengers, even if they chanced to note the old man loitering by the door of an empty house, or chalking on some closed window-shut-

ter, troubled themselves to pause and observe his proceedings. But although most of them hurried on, mindful of nothing but themselves, and the frequent pools created by the torrent that descended upon them, some passenger would now and then stop to gratify an impulse of curiosity, or of benevolent feeling it might be, to see what he was about; and many were the charitable warnings that he was in imminent danger of being sent as a vagabond to the treadmill, many the kind inquiries whether he had been employed by a quack doctor or a blacking-maker to chalk the walls of the metropolis, many the insolent and unfeeling jeers from a rabble of big boys (generally the worst tormentors misfortune can come in contact with in the streets of a great city) that the old man had to hear and to brave in the course of his desultory and painful perambulation.

Every now and then, moreover, he had to experience more legitimate and effectual interruption. The police, then recently established in the metropolis, were a body of men very different from the force in existence at the present day; far less disciplined, instructed, and considerate—plentiful as examples of a contrary character may be even now. The wretched old man had to endure all the rashness, insolence, and brutality of an unweeded and newly-raised constabulary, and frequent and fierce were the assaults to which his perseverance exposed him, as he slowly and silently crawled on his way, and then recommenced the seemingly forlorn and crazy experiment with his piece of chalk. Not with harsh and threatening words alone, but often with rude and violent thrusts, was the aged pedestrian driven along; but he renewed his attempt when out of sight, and raised his eyes every two or three minutes to the starless and unpitying sky, in muttered and inarticulate prayer for a blessing on his endeavour.

He had now threaded his way through a vast number

of streets, generally avoiding the leading and crowded thoroughfares, when he found himself in one of the obscurer parts of Marylebone. Sick at the very heart, weary to a degree that under less stimulating circumstances would have been utter exhaustion, the shops nearly all closed, and the streets scanty of passengers, while the rain, descending less fitfully with abated gusts of wind, gave sign of its continuance,—the old man did now feel desolate almost beyond endurance; when, as he passed a house that stood somewhat backward in a quiet corner of the street, a sound of merrymaking, of jocund, laughing, screaming, human voices broke upon his ear. The wanderer suddenly stopped. What a contrast between their noisy shouting revels, and the blank and dreary silence of that old man's aching heart! But his heart now beat, gently at first, and then more strongly and more quickly—beat with a pulse that owned a keen and penetrating pleasure for its mover, as his ear caught in those sounds of unrestrained and riotous rejoicings the voices of *children*.

There is no music like the human voice, and in that voice there is no music like the joyous prattle and the ringing laughter of children. So seemed to feel the old listener as he drew nearer to the house, and bent his ear to hearken to the mirth that, more than the wind without, appeared to be shaking the very roof to which it rose. Coarse as might be the clay of which he was formed; commonplace as in all else he might be; a being born with no more mental gifts than may be enjoyed by the meanest of his fellows, placed on earth apparently to drudge away their days, with minds hardly raising them above the brutes that divide with them the duty of labour; there was yet a feeling of the utmost possible refinement, a profound sense of sweetness and beauty, stirring in the old man, as he bent forward with his ear close to the window-shutter to

catch the broken exclamations, and the bursts of laughter, loud and clear, that rose from the little revellers within.

It was a holiday-making, a birthday celebration, and they were sitting up late, with sparkling eyes that seemed as if they were never to know sleep again, to a genuine snap-dragon, anticipating Christmas. The old man felt the rain less than ever, though it poured fast upon him from the ledge over the shutters, while he listened intently to discriminate the various voices of the shouters, and catch them separately as they broke forth and blended into one wild tumult of delight. Each in succession he seemed to note and dwell upon; from the low, inward, bubbling, heart-shaking laugh, intensely joyous, and struggling to escape into the relief of loudness, to the high-pitched, long-breathed, uncontrollable scream of rapture that terminates, only just in time, in tears and pantings. The same happy voice and the same wild laugh he recognised again and again; yet the pleasure within him died away, and his heart shrunk up, and lost its glow, and felt still, and cold, and desolate as before. He had heard them *all, all* the little voices one after another: he was certain that his ear had not missed a single sound: but it had recognised no tone that was *familiar* to it, no music like that it craved; no, nothing like it; for among the sounds of earth there was no resemblance to the sweet, low music of that *one* voice for which his soul, rather than his sense, was evermore listening night and day, in the wild visions of sleep, as in the desert haunts, the (to him) unpeopled streets of the thronged and tumultuous city.

But might there not be among the crowd of happy faces round the table, one *silent* child, one sad quiet gazer, one pale and gentle beholder of happiness in which she couldn't entirely participate, although she could not quite shut the sense of it from her heart, one

whose breathings were of stifled regret more than of active joy, of fear, surprise, and thoughts of tears shed recently, and to be shed again too soon, rather than of pleasure in the rude and novel liveliness of the scene. It was foolish, very foolish, he knew; it was vain and useless; yet something, it seemed to be a whisper in his heart, told him it might be. Should he knock; and pray, not in the name of humanity, but of Heaven that put divinity in it, for the charity of a kind answer to one fond and silly question! Should he risk the sharp repulse, and trust for his excuse to those beautiful sympathies, to those exquisite emotions of nature, which linking the old to the young, parents and children, in that common dwelling, were converting it into a temple of concord, charity, and love!

Such were his thoughts; though they wore, as they awoke within him, a homelier garb. He sat down on the doorstep to wait. After a time, a coach came for some of the children; he saw them, one by one, but they were strangers. Half-a-dozen went, and then more. He scanned their features as though he half-hoped to see some face he knew. At last all were gone. The fancy that even into that fold of luxury (compared with his own home), amongst that gay and fortunate flock, one shorn lamb might have strayed and found shelter, was indeed idle. The door closed, driving back the shivering old man upon that desolate prospect and despairing task, from which he had been thus attracted by sudden peals of childish laughter, and the associations to which they had given rise.

Now once more he journeyed onward, shaping his dreary course eastward, and taking occasionally in preference the principal streets; which he had hitherto shunned, as unfavourable by the lights in shops and the throng of passengers, to his object. The lateness of

the hour now precluded all fear of such interruptions; and the only impediments he had to expect were from the police, and such midnight wanderers as vice, or destitution, or habits of prowling, still kept from needful shelter.

And thus the hours rolled on, no star breaking through the wet and murky night, to cheer his way, or supply an image of that vague and feeble and far-off hope, whatever its nature might be, that struggled to keep alive its melancholy light amid the darkness of his thoughts.

Over scarcely less than the fourth part of the immense metropolis; through spacious streets and squalid alleys, amidst meanness and magnificence, all alike dreary to him; had his old and tired limbs draggingly borne him. Of his "looped and windowed raggedness," exposing him to the drizzling shower and the chilling blasts, he had for hours ceased to feel the effects; the severities of the night had no further power to subdue him; nor did fatigue admit of much increase, for once thoroughly weary and sore of foot, he felt that he could still drag on without great additional pain. Every now and then, while feebly endeavouring to guide, with his numb and aching fingers, the chalk he could just contrive to hold between them, he would start, and feel the blood rush warm into his very hand, as he fancied he heard in the wind that whistled past, the wailing of a *child*, hungry, deserted, and in peril. Occasionally, too, he would cast a glance up at a solitary window, which showed that a light was burning in the chamber of the sleeping, and feel that in that room might youth and innocence be nestled warm, and cradled in loving arms; yet not with less care and affection might his own enfold the innocence his heart doted on, though theirs were comforts far beyond any his poverty could supply—com-

forts, which, scanty as they were, that heart sickened with anguish to think might at that very time be denied to the object of its love.

He had rested two or three times since his wanderings commenced; but from such drier nooks and sheltering corners as he could find, he was driven by the patrol under pain of being committed to prison for the crime of houselessness, known to the law by the name of vagrancy. He had now sunk for a few minutes on a step in the vicinity of Charing-Cross, when the streaming light from a policeman's lantern aroused him from his reflections. Sternly warned of his having been seen loitering about the spot on two previous mornings, and that if caught there again he would find no favour, he bent his steps (the clock warning him that it was near daybreak) to his wretched home, in one of the poorest districts of Westminster. Advanced but a little way, he stopped to make one final trial with the friendly chalk, the last piece of which was now reduced to a size so small, that it was with difficulty he could hold it. It crumbled away before he could finish the few words; what he had written was useless without the rest; and a presentiment came over him (for sorrow is ever superstitious), that this last attempt, if completed, would be fortunate—that the writing would not be effaced, that it would be seen and read—that it would be successful when all the rest failed. Close by lay a heap of lime and rubbish. He searched among the dry mortar and chips of stone for something that might enable him to fulfil his wish ere he returned home; he groped within the wooden fence in front of the building; —when once more the long-darting rays of a lantern were turned upon him, a strong hand dragged him over the mass of rubbish, and hurried him, spent and exhausted, to the nearest station-house.

The next morning he was carried rather than led before a magistrate. The charge against him was established; he had been detected chalking on walls and doors, and qualifying himself for the House of Correction. Thither he was about to be committed, when it occurred to the magisterial mind that the culprit might have been writing treason on the walls.

"I don't think it was treason," said one of the constables, "'cause he don't seem quite right in his mind. He complains of having lost his little gal; his grandchild leastways."

The magistrates having observed that all respectable persons, when they lose their grandchildren, put themselves into decent mourning, instead of chalking walls;

"He don't mean dead," returned the constable; "he's *lost* her; she's stolen or strayed."

The old man's feelings here overcame him; he sobbed as if he had been but the little weak-nerved creature he bewailed. His story was told in a few simple words.

The child's mother, his only daughter, had deserted him before she was seventeen years old. A vicious life ended in a miserable death; but in the midst of that vice and misery grew into being that delicate flower of humanity, which he had hoped, so long as he drew Heaven's breath, to guard from the rude storms of the world. More, far more than a daughter to him, was that hapless and innocent being. As the child of his child, she seemed to bear a double life, and to claim a double love. Scant even to extreme poverty were his means; he was too feeble to pursue his occupation as a day-labourer, yet her wants he contrived to supply. And one day lately, while he had been employed out of doors, the fair, prattling, sweet-tempered girl, who was to him not more a thing that he should protect with his life than an angel watching over and sanctifying it,

suddenly disappeared. The lodgers in the house had seen her playing in the sunshine at the door; then a neighbour observed her at the end of the court listening to "some musicians;" and another noticed her looking into a "picture-shop" two streets off: beyond this there was no intelligence. She might have wandered into the wilderness of streets, been kidnapped, or crushed under waggon-wheels.

The old man was too miserably poor to pay for the printing of handbills; and for three long nights had he paced the streets of the city, east and west, chalking on the walls the statement of his loss, the name of the little wanderer, and a description of her person. He described the eyes and the hair of his beloved granddaughter:

"Lost, a little girl, name Mary Rose, six years old; had on a green spotted frock; blue eyes, and light soft hair, long, and curled on the neck; tall, and speaks quick, with a sweet voice. Wandered from her grandfather, Green-arbour-court," &c.

Such were the words, though not so spelt. I know not how the incident may affect others: it may seem very trifling: but to me it appeared not undeserving a place among those chronicles of real life that record what is most profound and beautiful in natural affection. What a heart of love had that old man! and how impotent such words—"blue eyes," "soft curled hair," and "sweet voice"—to speak the sense of beauty that made part of its overflowing fondness! How impossible by such phrases to make the stranger see in the lost child, the image of loveliness on which his soul hung until the earthly became as something heavenly! What a lifetime of anxiety and dread must have been compressed into those three nights and days, so spent in threading the endless maze of London!

Everywhere but to his home he had gone; there he scarcely dared to go; the dark, silent, empty room looked like a grave that had been dug for him. And thither, as to a grave, when dismissed by the magistrate, he repaired; to find, that had he returned sooner, the past night would have been one of transport. The dove had flown back to the ark. The little creature had been awake all night long; but now she slept, unconscious of the loving, rapturous, half-blind eyes that dropped tears of joy as they watched beside her.

JACK GAY, ABROAD AND AT HOME.

Who that had once met Jack Gay at dinner, where'er the feast of venison and the flow of port prevailed, ever forgot him? What lady, the luckiest of her sex, ever experienced his "delicate attentions" at a quiet evening party, a quiet concert, or a quiet dance, without speaking of him from that moment, not as the most charming of acquaintances, but as a very old friend; without feeling quite sure that she had known him all her life, though she had never seen him but that once?

What spirits he had! Other men had their jovial moods, but Jack was always jovial. To be lively by fits and starts, to be delightful when the humour sets in, to emulate the fair exquisite of Pope,

> And make a lover happy—*for a whim*—

is within anybody's reach. But Jack had no fits and starts; the humour flowed in one unebbing course, and his whim consisted in making everybody as happy as he was at all seasons.

His joviality never depended upon the excellence of a dinner, the choice of wines, or any accident of the hour. His high spirits and invariable urbanity were wholly independent of the arrangements of the table, the selection of the guests, and the topics of conversation. He discovered pleasant things to hearken to, and found delightful themes to chat upon, even during the dreary twenty minutes before dinner. Yes, even *that* was a lively time to Jack. Whenever he went out it was to enjoy a pleasant evening, and he enjoyed it.

> The fish was spoil'd, the soup was cold,
> The meat was broil'd, the jokes were old,
> The tarts were dumps, the wine not cool,
> The guests were pumps, the host a fool.

But for all this Jack cared about as much as a flying-fish cares for a shower of rain. No combination of ill omens and perverse accidents ever proved a damper to him.

He is invited to meet (say) Johnson and Burke, and is greeted, on his entrance, with the well-known tidings that Johnson and Burke "could'nt come." Does Jack heave one sigh in compliment to the illustrious absentees, and in depreciation of the company who *have* assembled? Not he. No momentary shade of disappointment dims his smiling face. He seems as delighted to meet the little parlour-full of dull people, as though the room were crammed with Crichtons. He has the honour of being presented to little Miss Symebody, from the country, who seems shy; and he takes the same pains to show his pleasure in the introduction, and to tempt the timid stranger to talk, that he would have exerted in an effort to interest Mrs. Siddons. He sits next to a solemn ignoramus, who is facetious in expounding the humours of Squire Bog, his neighbour, or didactic in developing the character of Dogsby, the great patriot

in his parish; and Jack listens as complacently as though his ear were being regaled with new-born bon-mots of Sheridan's, or anecdotes of the Earl of Chatham.

Jack, like some statesmen, was born to be out; and to him, as to some other statesmen, all parties were the same. The only preference he ever seemed to entertain was for the particular party that chanced at the particular moment to rejoice in his presence. He enjoyed everything that happened. Leigh Hunt, describing a servant-maid "at the play," observes, that every occurrence of the evening adds to her felicity; for she likes even the waiting between the acts, which is tiresome to others. So with Jack at a party. He enjoyed some dislocated experiments on the harp, by an astonishing child, aged only fifteen; and was the sole person in the room who encored with *sincerity* that little prodigy's convulsive edition of "Bid me discourse." He listened with laudable gravity to Master Henry's recitation of "Rolla's Address," and suggested the passages in which John Kemble was rather too closely followed. He enjoyed the glasses of warm wine handed round between the songs; he liked the long flat pauses, "when nobody said nothing to his neighbour;" and he liked the sudden burst of gabble in which at the termination of the pause, as if by preconcerted agreement, every creature eagerly joined.

He liked the persons he had never met before, and those whom he was in the habbit of meeting just seven times a week. He admired the piano that was always out of tune, and the lady who, kindly consenting to play, was always out of temper. He thought the persons to whom he had not been introduced very agreeable, and all the rest extremely entertaining. He was delighted with his evening, whether it exploded in a

grand supper, or went-off, flash-in-the-pan fashion, with a sandwich.

He never bottled up his best things, to uncork them in a more brilliant company the next night; he was never dull because he was expected to shine, and never, by laborious efforts to shine, succeeded in showing that dulness was his forte. He pleased everybody because he was pleased himself; and he was himself pleased, because he could not help it. Many queer-looking young men sang better, but nobody sang with such promptness and good taste; many awkward gawkies danced with more exactness and care, but nobody danced so easily to himself or so acceptably to his partner; many handsome dashing fellows were more showy and imposing in their manners, but none produced the agreeable effect that followed a few words of his, or one of his joyous laughs; nay, even a kind and sprightly glance. The elaborate, and long-meditated impromptu of the reputed wit fell still-born; while one of Jack's unstudied gay-hearted sallies burst like a rocket, and showered sparkles over the room.

Everybody went away convinced that there was one human being in the world whose oasis of life had no surrounding desert. Jack lived but for enjoyment. The links of the chain that bound him to existence, were of pure gold; there was no rough iron clanking between. He seemed sent into the world to show how many may be amused, cheered, comforted, by one light heart. That heart appeared to tell him, that where his fellow-creatures were, it was impossible to be dull; and the spirit of this assurance prevailed in all he said and did; for if he staid till the last half dozen dropped off, he was just as fresh and jocund as when the evening began. He never knew what it was to be tired; and as the hospitable door was at last closed upon him, you heard him

go laughing away down the steps. Upon his tomb, indeed, might be written a paraphrase of the epitaph so gloriously earned by his illustrious namesake:

> So that the merry and the wise might say,
> Pressing their jolly bosoms, "Here *laughs* Gay!"

But did anybody, who may happen to see this page, ever see the aforesaid Jack at home?—at high-noon, or in the evening when *preparing to go out!* Behold him on the eve of departure—just going—about to plunge, at the appointed moment, into the revelries of a brilliant circle, where, if he were not, a score of sweet voices would fall to murmuring "I wish he were here!" For the admiration, the envy, the cordial liking which surely await him there, you would now be apt to substitute commiseration, regret; a bit of friendly advice to him to stop at home, and a pull at the bell for pen-and-ink that he might write an excuse.

The truth is, that Jack was a morbid, irresolute, wayward, cross-grained chap. He was kind-hearted in the main, and even generous; but his temper was often sullen, and his spirit often cynical. Catch him on a winter's afternoon, half an hour before he dressed for dinner! You would think him twenty years older, and five bottle-noses uglier. You would conclude that he was going to dine with Diogenes in his tub, or to become a partaker of a skeleton-feast in Surgeons'-hall. The last time we ever saw Jack out of company, he was in such a mood as we have hinted at. It was a November afternoon between five and six; there was no light in the room; but by the melancholy gleam of a low fire, he was to be seen seated on a music-stool with his feet on the fender, his elbows on his knees, his head resting upon his hands, and his eyes listlessly wandering over the dull coals in search of the picturesque.

"Come in!" growled the voice of the Charmer. "Can you grope your way? Dreary rooms these; and lights make 'em worse."

Then without moving his seat to give us a share of the fire, he applied the poker to the cinders, not to kindle a blaze and throw a light upon the gloom, but evidently to put out any little stray flame that might happen to be lingering there. There was just light enough to show that his face wore an air of profound sadness and despondency. To a serious inquiry as to the cause—if anything had happened,

"Yes," murmured the Fascinator, with an amiable scowl, "the weather has happened, November has happened, and dinner will happen in another hour. Here's a night to go three miles for a slice of saddle o' mutton! My luck! Cold and wet, isn't it?" continued the Irresistible, knocking cinder after cinder into the ashes; "I'm miserable enough at home, and so forsooth, I must dress and go out. Ugh! This is what they call having a pleasant life of it. I don't know what you may think, but I look upon an invitation to dinner as nothing less than insult. Why should I be dragged out of my wretched nook here, without an appetite, and against my will? We call this a free country, where nobody's allowed to be miserable in his own way; where every man's a slave to ceremony; a victim to his own politeness, a martyr to civil notes. Here's my saddle o' mutton acquaintance, for example; I never hurt or offended the man in all my days, and yet I must go and dine with him. I'd rather go to a funeral. Well if you've anything to say, out with it, for my hour's come. Now mind, before I ring this bell, I predict that there's no hot water, and that my boots are damp."

The difference between Jack at six, and Jack at

seven, was the difference between a clock down and a clock wound up; between a bird in the shell, and a bird on the wing; between a bowl of punch before, and after, the spirit is poured in it was the difference between Philip drunk and Philip sober (or the reverse if you will); between a lord mayor in his plain blue-coat and kerseys, and a lord mayor in his state robes; between Grimaldi at the side-scene waiting to go on, with that most melancholy shadow on his face which tradition has so touchingly painted, and Grimaldi on the stage, in view of the convulsed spectators, the illuminator of congregated dulness, the instantaneous disperser of the blues, the explorer of every crevice of the heart wherein care can lurk, an embodied grin. It was the difference, to speak more exactly still, between Sappho at her toilet, and Sappho at an evening mask.

To see Jack when just beginning to prepare for a drop-in somewhere, late at night, between ten and twelve, was almost as good as seeing him when arrived there. The rash promise made, he always contrived to fulfil it; though it was often ten chances to one that he did not, and he appeared to keep his engagements by miracle. As the hour drew nigh, you would imagine that he had just received tidings of the dreadful loss of several relatives per railroad, or that half his income had been swallowed up in a mine, or forged exchequer-bills. It would be impossible to conjecture that his shrugs and sighs, peevish gestures and muttered execrations, were but the dark shadows of a brilliant "coming event;" that discontent and mortification were the forerunners of the gay hours; and that bitter moroseness, limping and growling, announced the approach of the dancing Pleasures!

So it was; for Jack at that moment, instead of hailing these dancing Pleasures by anticipation, and meeting

them at least half-way, would gladly have ridden ten miles in any other direction. He could make himself tolerably comfortable anywhere, save at the place to which he was ruthlessly, imperiously bound; with anybody, save with the people who were anxiously waiting for a glimpse of his good-humoured visage. He was fully bent on going, in fact he felt that he must; yet he raised every obstacle that ill-temper could invent, knowing all the while that he should be obliged to surmount them.

He would even allow his reluctance to stir, to prevail so far over the gentlemanly principle of his nature, as to question secretly within himself whether he *ought* to go, while he entertained a suspicion that the people who had again invited him were not *quite* prudent in giving so many expensive parties!

He would catch hold of any rag of an acquaintance just then, to cover his loneliness, and to save him from utter solitude; to give him an excuse for procrastinating, and an opportunity of grumbling out his regrets at stripping from head to foot, not to go to bed, but to go *out*; at being doomed to shake off his quiet moping mood, and plunge head-foremost into festivity. And then, when the effort had been made, when the last obstacle had been overcome, when he was arrayed from top to toe, and could no longer complain of this thing not in readiness, and that thing mislaid, or the glove that split in drawing it on, or the cab that was not (*and never was*) on the stand when he wanted one, he would ask himself with a deep-drawn sigh the melancholy question: "Isn't it hard that a man *must* go out, with a broken heart, to take an hour or two's jollification at this time of night!"

Off went Jack Gay; and until four in the morning the merry hours lagged far behind his joyous spirits.

Hospitality put on his magic boots to run a race with him, and the bewitching eyes of Pleasure herself looked grave and sleepy compared with the glistening orbs of her votary!

PASSIONATE PEOPLE.

"So you will fly out! Why can't you be cool like me? What good can passion do? Passion's of no use, you impudent, obstinate, overbearing reprobate."—*Sir Anthony Absolute.*

Of all the evils, all the injuries, all the calamities, by which passionate people are liable to be visited, none are so perilous, so overwhelming, as the encounter with a meek, cool, patient, unanswering adversary; if adversary such a wretch can be called. There is no trial in life like this. The bare idea of it puts one out of temper. To be placed, when in the full swing of a violent fit of rage, when indulging to an excess in the wildest transports of the soul, when giving loose to the most riotous emotions of our nature; to be placed at such a juncture right opposite some cold calm personification of indifference, some compound of sadness and tranquillity, with an air of entire submission, with drooping lids, and perhaps a smile not entirely free from *pity;* to see some such person sitting there imperturbably philosophical, putting the best construction possible upon one's violence, and evidently making silent excuses for one's ungovernable fury! I put it to any rational madman, that is to say to any man I know, whether this be not a species of exasperation too great to be borne, and quite enough to make one start off for

Niagara, to enjoy the intense satisfaction, the indispensable relief, of jumping down.

I wouldn't give one drop of ink for a man who never goes into terrific passions; who never lets his blood boil over, at least now and then; but I should feel peculiar pleasure in hurling any inkstand (the writing-desk would be better), at the head of him whose fury did not instantly become ten thousand times more inflamed by the mere presence of that smooth oily virtue, that "ostentatious meekness," which at once sighs in submissiveness and smiles in superiority.

All the mischiefs that arise from the excesses of anger and rage must be conscientiously set down to the account of that provoking passiveness, that calmness which irritates the fiery beholder past endurance. Let the physician, who would minister to the mind diseased, take any shape but that. Who is there that cannot bear testimony to its galling effects from his own observation or experience? Only say to a man in a pet, "Now don't lose your temper," and he falls naturally into a rage; say to one already exasperated, and on the verge of a fit of fury, "Pray don't put yourself into a passion, it's all a mistake, there's nothing to be angry about;" and what so sure to set him off at a pace past stopping!

The image of "Patience on a monument smiling at Grief" has been greatly admired, but as a design it would hardly hold together for five minutes. Shakspeare was a little out for once. Patience *smiling* at Grief! How could Grief stand it? She would be transformed into Rage in no time. If at all in earnest, she must necessarily be provoked to jump down in a paroxysm, or to pitch Patience off the monument.

To the truly irritable, and I confess that I am one of them, all such irritation, to say the least of it, is super-

fluous. To us who have "free souls," no such provocation is wanting at any time. We are always ready to go ahead without this high pressure; our quick blood renders the spur unnecessary. We never wait for "the motive and the cue for passion" that Hamlet speaks of.

The real relish and enjoyment of it consists in going into a rage about nothing. The next pleasure to that consists in being roused to fury about other people's affairs; in lashing oneself into madness about some grievance borne by a person who seems perfectly indifferent to it. There are numbers of people who may be thus said to go into passions by proxy. They have experienced a slight, of which they give a cool account to some susceptible friend, who stamps and raves at every word of the narrative. They calmly inform you that they have been shamefully ill-used; upon which they stroke their chins complacently, and leave you to tear your hair. The man who has been cruelly wronged describes with a glib tongue, while the uninjured auditor disinterestedly gnashes his teeth. I have always admired that passage in one of George Colman's plays, where a warm-hearted fellow, giving an account of some flagrant act of oppression to which he had been a witness, observes: "Well, you know, that wasn't *no affair of mine;* no, and *so I felt all my blood creeping into my knuckles:*" and the result shows that he fell, with exemplary promptitude, into a glorious passion in behalf of the oppressed but uncomplaining stranger.

This bit of fiction calls to mind a fact which may with no impropriety be here related. It is an anecdote of a distinguished writer now no more, W. G. He had complained to me of some ungracious conduct, by which he felt hurt and insulted; he was helpless, and this made the sense of injury more acute. He spoke with bitterness, though in gentle tones. I did not echo those

tones; for he was illustrious by his intellect, and venerable by his years; and, as the phrase is, I at once "rapped out;"—pouring a torrent of reproach, and heaping a mountain of invectives, on the heads of those, who, to use his own words, "had dared to put an indignity upon him." He heard me, very quietly, until the full burst of indignation with which his more moderate complaint had inspired me was exhausted, and then said, with an ejaculation short, sharp, and peculiar to him, "I'm afraid you've been picking up some queer doctrines of late; the principle of them is, as far as I can understand, to be discontented with everything!" Now as *he* had taught me just then to be discontented, and as I was moreover only discontented on his account, I did *not* immediately leap out of my fit of passion into one of philosophy; and I believe he was upon that occasion much struck with certain metaphysical phenomena, on which I left him to brood; with the curious distinction, that is to say, between one fellow-creature undergoing the punishment of the knout without exhibiting a symptom of distress, and another fellow-creature looking on, all grief and anguish, shuddering at the spectacle, and feeling every lash on his own heart.

These are the most generous bursts of rage that can be indulged in; and, next to those that are altogether destitute even of the shadow of a cause, are the most delicious to the irritable. The wrongs, troubles, and perversities of individuals, from near relatives to total strangers, generally form a plentiful supply; in fact, the smallest offence will be thankfully received, as the history of irascible people amply shows. Very good grounds for anger occur, as we can all remember, when a fellow-traveller at an inn refuses to take mustard with his pork-chop; or when another, in spite of every hint, persists in breaking his eggs at the small end, or lighting

his cheroot at the large end; or when a sturdy fellow walks just before you through a smart shower of rain, and won't put his umbrella up, though you obligingly tap him on the shoulder, and remind him that it's pouring; or when an obstinate one declines the adoption of somebody else's opinion, merely because he has not been convinced of its reasonableness; or when an affected one pronounces the word London "Lunnun," and Birmingham "Brummagem," and, while he asserts in his justification that Lord Brougham calls the places by those names, refuses to distinguish his lordship as Lord Bruffham.

If individual grievances or peculiarities should fail, which is scarcely possible, national ones will do as well. Nay, I know a philanthropist whose heart was broken fifty times a-year, whose blood boiled hourly, at the recollection of some great outrage that had happened in the dark ages. Passion, moreover, has this convenience, that it is an essential privilege of it to reason from the individual to the national. Thus, if a Russian government, or a Russian faction, inflict wrongs on Poland, all Russia may be indiscriminately condemned; and thus, too, if an American visiting this country should be wanting in good manners, or give you any cause of offence, you can with strict propriety launch out into a tirade against the American people, their customs and institutions, laws and dispositions; wrath will there find "elbow room." You may wind up with the observation that, bad as is the brute whom you have just encountered, you believe him to be quite as good as the very best of his countrymen.

This, indeed, may be laid down as a rule: when a Scotchman offends you, abuse all Scotland, and offer to prove that Burns was no poet; when an Irishman puts you in a heat, be sure to denounce Ireland, and hint

that St. Patrick was no gentleman, nor were his ancestors decent people. With an Englishman the case is rather different, because anything you may say against John Bull is pretty sure to please, instead of annoying a member of his family; who won't much mind a back-handed hit at himself, if you direct the principal force of your attack against the national character. It is expedient, therefore, to be less sweeping in your charge, to concentrate your forces, and to content yourself with a small explosion, fatal only to his immediate friends and relations. Point out how remarkable it is that so many persons of the same name should have been hanged for sheep-stealing; question the depth of his breeches-pocket, where he rattles a bunch of keys, as though he had anything to lock up; and pick out some cousin of his who is very badly off, and spitefully ask him to dinner. But you will never vent your rage satisfactorily by merely abusing Old England in an Englishman's presence.

To get into a passion in the street is sometimes peculiarly awkward. It makes you feel like a bottle of soda-water that wants to go off and can't. Some people ought to have their hats wired down, cork-fashion. Walking with an irascible friend the other day (I am fond of such companions, and can boast a great variety of them), he worked himself into as pretty a specimen of fury as I have lately seen; but what was to be done? There was nothing to cause it, and there was no relief to be had. Apple-stalls upset are but vulgar exploits; me he could not strangle in the open street; there was no temptation to smash a lamp in the broad daylight, however agreeable and comfortable at night; there was no loitering schoolboy in the way, to be kicked "for *always* tying that shoe;" yet, "as fires imprisoned fiercest burn," out the blaze must burst, the volcano

was not to be smothered up. Accordingly, just as we reached the open window of a butcher's shop, on the board of which a lad in blue sleeves, and black, glossy, curling hair, sat intently reading the "Sorrows of Werter," my passionate friend stopped. Whether he meant to snatch a weapon, à la Virginius, was doubtful. I thought at least he would have snatched the grease-marked volume out of the hands of the sentimental butcher-boy, and trampled it under foot; when, instead, off he darted across the wide street, I following, rushed up to a house opposite, seized the large knocker, and plied it with the combined force of forty footmen, or a legion of penny-postmen rolled into one! I stood looking on, amazed, while he knocked and knocked, without one moment's cessation, until the door was torn open, and the knocker dropped from his fingers. The servant-maid looked aghast, yet the accustomed spirit of inquiry, Who was he? What, *did* he want? was uppermost in her face. "Oh!" said my now subdued companion, "Oh! ah!-a-I'm sorry to have troubled you! I-a-I don't want anybody; it's all right, thank you, I'm better now!" Thus saying he quietly took my arm, and we sauntered off. I never saw a fellow in a more charming flow of spirits than his were throughout the rest of that day.

But it is more judicious to choose a spot where you can fall into a rage comfortably. It is a pity, for example, to get excited at Charing-cross, merely by the sight of a Dover coach, with the name of the town upon it spelt with two o's, "Dovor." "There goes one of those confounded coaches again," said a companion the other day; "how savage they make me! Do*vor*! Why can't they spell the name properly?" "Oh, what does it signify?" "Signify! why it's my native town! it puts me in such a passion that I can't walk;" and by

the pace at which he went there appeared a probability of his overtaking the coach. As a man intoxicated can run easily, when walking is difficult, so a man in a passion finds similar relief. I have heard of a nervously-excited individual who was so annoyed at the cry of "Bank, Bank," all down the Strand, that he jumped into one of the vehicles, resolved to go to the Bank and draw out his balance; nor did he remember, until he got there, that he had performed that ceremony the day before.

What I should respectfully recommend to any one on whom the fit comes suddenly out-of-doors, whether occasioned by some irritating train of thought, or a casual encounter equally provocative, is to go directly home, and give his family the benefit of it. Surely the best compliment he can pay his wife is to presume that her attachment to him is so great that she will endure any ill-usage; that she would rather see him return home in a tremendous passion, than have him stay longer away from her. A man who truly relishes his fit of rage will find a sweet relief in making his family uncomfortable. The children he can immediately order up to bed in the dark; and if anything in the shape of protest falls from the doting mother, he can take an opportunity, slyly, of upsetting a vase of flowers, water and all, into her work-box, or of tilting the inkstand upon the favourite autograph in her album.

In the case of a single man, who has neither fond parent nor devoted partner to vent his fury on, a theatre is no bad resource; he can take his seat in some quiet corner and hiss the performance, he will find it very soothing to his feelings; but he should choose, if possible, the first night of a new drama, and be constantly on his guard, or he will be tricked out of all his pleasure by the actors. I know a man who went in a great

passion on purpose to hiss a new comedy, but being off his guard, he sat and laughed all the evening.

Brutus desires Cassius to "go show his slaves how choleric he is, and make his bondmen tremble;" implying that it was still more vulgar and degrading to go into a passion before servants. This notion prevails amongst a certain class of the choleric to this day. It is not at all uncommon in genteel families, where appearances must at all sacrifices be kept up, for John to be desired to shut the door, and perhaps to be despatched to the remotest part of the house, while his master and mistress sit down to fight out a pitched battle with bated breath; whispering their fierce retorts, and dealing out their virulence *sotto voce*, that it may not reach the kitchen; recrimination, with savage aspect, speaking in the blandest key, and threats of separate maintenance breathing in tones that would have added a delicious tenderness to the fondest sentiment. All of a sudden, perhaps, a violent crash is heard; the lady, who "could bear it no longer," has commenced some sportive sallies with the tea-cups, and the gentleman has promptly followed in some equally lively experiments with the saucers; and John, when in wild alarm he re-enters the apartment, perceives in an instant, as clear as crockery itself, that naughty Dash has *not* been jumping upon the tea-table, and that it is *not* that calumniated quadruped by whom the best blue-and-gold service has been devoted to destruction.

All these tamperings with passion are great mistakes; there can be no enjoyment but in speaking out, and letting all the world hear if they like. I always admired the unhesitating frankness of that respectable tradesman (I forget his name, purposely), who, about nine one summer morning, after "some words" with his lady respecting the comparative merits of Souchong and

Mocha, deliberately opened the first-floor window, and dashed out the whole breakfast set, tray and all, into one of the leading streets of the metropolis. People, it is said, put up their umbrellas as they pass, to this day, in constant expectation of a milky shower, with small squares of sugar for hailstones. But all such experiments with cups and saucers, glasses, vases, mirrors, &c., are much better performed, for obvious reasons, at other people's houses than at your own. It is very pleasant, and quite pardonable, to sweep a few glasses off the table in a fit of enthusiasm, now and then, when you are dining out; but it is perfectly ridiculous to proceed to such extremities at home, where the modes of venting rage are infinite. For a somewhat similar reason, I differ from those who systematically tear their own hair when they fall into a paroxysm; there is no occasion for it, because you might happen to be wearing a wig, and the effect would be ludicrous. It is far better to thrust your hand desperately into the loose locks of somebody sitting next to you, tearing them violently for the space of an instant, and then apologizing for the wildness of your excitement, and the extreme susceptibility of your feelings. Your sensibility and the frankness of your disposition will find many admirers; but to pull your own hair has at best but an affected and theatrical look.

The practice common to many of the choleric, that of taking off their hats, flinging them at the first object they see, and then kicking them, regardless of expense, is one that seems to have arisen out of an instinctive feeling; but until lately it was to be condemned as ruinous to those who fall very frequently into a passion; it is less exceptionable now; the cheap hats are immense conveniences to the choleric. It is better, however, to snatch a friend's off his head, and set your foot upon it,

taking care to pick it up immediately, tenderly putting it into shape a little, brushing its injured nap, and returning it with your unfeigned regrets. I should not omit to mention one ingenious expedient, which is sure to produce a speedy relief to over-excited feelings. It is recommended, on authority, as infallible. You should first lock the door of your sitting-room, and then lie down on your back upon the rug before the fire, taking at the same time one of the long bell-ropes in either hand. In this position you will find a little violent pulling very pleasant. But don't leave off, merely because everybody in the house comes rattling at the door, desiring to know, not for their own, but for Heaven's sake, what 's the matter. Keep on tugging at both bells until the door is broken open; you will then come to quite comfortably.

The great have some advantages over the humble, but they lack the luxury of giving a loose to rage at all seasons. They cannot storm and rave at their own sweet will; while the lowest creature committed to prison by the magistrate can always spring from the grasp of the constable, and break a window or two. This may seem a poor relief: not so: there is, doubtless, an exquisite satisfaction in knowing that nothing less than a large county must pay the damage. Suppose you only shatter a dozen panes, or effect other wilful injury; is there not something grand in being revenged upon Middlesex, or venting your fury on all Yorkshire?

Great or humble, Rage is sweet to all. Anger, not Love, is the universal emotion. The mildest and most even-tempered man I ever met let out the secret of his fiery disposition the other day, and betrayed the violent passions that sometimes seize him. Complaining of the extreme smallness of his new library, in a figurative style, at once emphatic and elegant, he said, "It isn't

large enough to swing a cat in;" adding (evidently with a reference to his habits when under the influence of passion), "*which is very inconvenient!*" Cats are useful animals in a house. Is it doubtful, when Sir Anthony Absolute had stormed at the Captain, and the Captain in consequence had raved at Fag, and Fag in due succession had pumelled the footboy, that the footboy went forthwith and kicked the cat?

PEOPLE WHO "ALWAYS KEEP THEIR WORD."

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.
Ham. Oh! but she'll keep her word.

THE people who always keep their word, if you will take their word for the fact, are to be met with in immense varieties. To portray them is to paint Legion. It is also to unite opposites under one head; for those who always keep their word are not to be known sometimes from those who never do.

For example. There is no family in town in which the virtue of fidelity in the performance of a promise is so much cried up as in the Froth family; and whoever happens to be intimate with any of its members knows particularly well that there is not an atom of that virtue existing amongst them. Conscientious exactness is insisted upon by each, and not a word they say can be taken as worth more than the breath that utters it.

In one respect only have they been faithful; in the promise which all the younger ones gave to take after their elders. Likeness could hardly prevail more in a

family of peas. Old Mrs. Froth, full of her sons, always cries, "Nick's word is his bond!" or, "Ah! you may trust Joseph;" and the venerable head of the Froths, smiling in sweet paternal pride, exclaims, "If Julia promises, conclude it done."

Who would not believe in their belief when they join in one note, "What a blessing to have children around one in whom every body can place reliance!"

And the children themselves echo the conscious flattery. "We were brought up with such strictness in our family, and taught to hold promises so sacredly, that no doubt we *are* a little particular; we always keep our word."

These Froths utter their falsehoods so complacently to each other's faces, and appear so unmisgivingly in earnest, that not to confide, as they seem to do, is for a season impossible. It is easier to distrust one's senses than their assertions; such is the handsome, honest-looking front carried by the family faith.

"Joseph is honour itself," remarks Julia; "sensitive to a fault about the sanctity of his word. He would forfeit life in one instant, rather than fail to redeem any trifling pledge that he had given."

"Really," cries Joseph, once a day, "if there be an angel upon earth, a human creature all divine truth, purity, and consciousness, it is my sister, Julia Froth. To say that she never broke her word yet, is saying nothing; I venture to assert that she never will break it; she *can't*."

And yet it were wiser to walk on rotten ice than to put faith for an instant in that angel upon earth, or in that soul of honour, her panegyrist. Trust is not to be reposed in any member of the Froth family without risk of ruin; in truth, it is doubtful how far it would be right to take their word, even if they faithfully pro-

mised to break it. Possibly, however, they might then be trustworthy, but then only. If the little squalling Froth in the cradle were to promise, with its first fragments of words, and instalments of innocent nursery phrases, to cry lustily for hours, with all the lungs it could command, would nobody credit the babe! The nuisance would be otherwise probable, but the promise would operate as a security against it. If the child, a few years afterwards, grown into the unruliest little rebel alive, were to threaten to tug off the table-cloth, soup, fish-sauce, and all, you might proceed to finish your dinner undismayed, for to believe a word of his would be ridiculous. Nobody believes the Froths from birth to burial.

It would be difficult to say what profit they find in pursuing such a course, and it is not easier to surmise the nature of the pleasure which they take in it. But doubtless it imposes upon them the necessity of standing by each other, and gratifies self-love by drawing largely for praise upon lips privileged to utter it while its own are sealed. Vanity, like murder, will sometimes speak miraculously enough, though it have no tongue. It sets all its family to puff it vehemently. The praise can neither be too frequent nor too fervent. Son puffs father, mother daughter, and sister brother; great-aunts and cousins alike administering and partaking the gale, if need be; nay, the fondest of grandmammas being called in upon occasion;—all evincing the ardour of that affection, so prevalent in families, which runs the great circle and is still at home.

Nick, perhaps, of all the family we have been adverting to, is foremost in coolness when breaking the word which it is the game of his life to vow he always keeps. Whether this coolness disarms or deceives people, may be doubted; but they rarely complain; continuing to

allow Nick Froth to make fools of them at all hours and in his own way.

In whatever water you may happen to be, there he is upon the surface floating buoyantly within hail, and anxious to play the friend in any emergency. But just as you are sinking, he lets go your hand, and swims off in search of the life-buoy, promising to return with speed. He enters eagerly into an engagement to get you out of hot water, and when the element has had plenty of time to cool, there he is at his post, ready to redeem his promise.

Nick Froth is as noisy as the sea surf, and about as safe in his mode of handling those he serves. Escape his intervention you cannot. Whatever be the affair you have in hand, he insists upon taking it at once out of your direction, and managing it for you. Whatever you are doing, that he must undo. He pounces upon your best-considered plans, and with his broad fist and clumsy foot dashes the delicate machinery to atoms. Now he is to show you what he will invent and set up in its place.

You have thought long over the matter; deeply interested in it, your natural penetration has been quickened, your inventive faculty taxed to the utmost; you have arrived by the clearest means open to your comprehension at the shortest road to the accomplishment of your object; and you are, therefore, the more astonished, the more charmed, at the exquisite ease, and almost intuitive knowledge, with which Nick Froth, quietly walking in, and surveying your much-meditated scheme, pronounces it to be all "wrong," and demolishes in a breath what you had conceived with such fondness and constructed with such care. Wrong it must all be, since Nick Froth, whose interests are unconcerned, and whose opinion is unsolicited, can see so readily that it is a mistake.

True, he does not immediately point out the "right" in place of it, but enough for one day is the detection of error. The task of discovering the true way is reserved; that is *his* affair, that is to be left to *him*, he is to set about that the first opportunity. His promise is enough; everybody knows that he "always keeps his word." Nevertheless, poor truster in frothy promises, you will see and hear no more of Nick on that subject. He had only promised himself the pleasure of marring your plan and checking your progress, and he has kept his word.

One every-day incident will sufficiently describe that farce of life in which Nick Froth plays the hero. There are occasions when the manner and tone of a letter may affect all one's prospects and interests. Over such an eventful document had Nick's dear friend bent his aching brow from sunrise to noon, with slow, painful doubt, and frequent sense of failure, but terminating in conscious success. Each word had been weighed, and the distance between every two words had been measured. Circumspection had taken its last look on all sides; a thousand niceties peculiar to the case had been consecutively noticed; and objection, in its most querulous mood, could not have thrust a pin's point through that perfect composition.

Enter Froth; and Friendship (the fool), even before she had time to consult him, was caught in the clutch of his opinion, which always takes the form of a verdict. It was fortunate he arrived as he did! that letter would *not* do; it adopted the very tone that should be most avoided. But a missive, in some shape, must be despatched without delay. He would draw up the form of it on the spot; the exact thing that was wanted.

"First," said Nick Froth, deliberately tearing the

rejected form of epistle into strips, and placing them upon the fire, "let us get rid of the false model, to avoid perplexity and confusion."

With the blaze expired the epistolary ardour of Nick Froth. He seized a sheet of paper; tried some new pens, in a dozen "dear sirs," and a few signatures, scrawled in lines ingeniously divergent; adding to these, as chat intermingled with his literary recreations, various eyes that might have belonged to pen-and-ink owls of a humorous turn, and wandering human noses cut off in the pride of their snubness or aquilinism; but not a word of the letter which was to replace the destroyed. The prettiest line of the last new song, some calculations after the manner of Cocker, and a fair sketch in a rather free style of the dear friend before him, thrown for the occasion into a very inconsolable attitude, filled up another sheet or two of paper; and then, as the hours had run away so agreeably, Nick Froth, growing quite impatient to begin, determined on hastening home immediately, to draw up, quickly and studiously, the all-important epistle. He was a man of his word, and of course it was all but written already. Every syllable of it was in his brain! and there every syllable remained! Vainly did his dear friend wish that he could but have stayed Nick's officious hand, and saved from the flames the modelled sentences never to be recalled; that letter, now no less lost for ever than the delectable substitute for it with which the brain of Froth was nominally pregnant.

If you are foolish as well as sick, rely upon Nick's promise to return by and bye with an antidote for every ailment you labour under; but let him not throw the composing draught already prescribed for you out of window before he goes. If you are mad as well as in trouble, believe by all means that Nick will keep his

word and bring Hercules to your aid; but, in the meantime, put your own shoulder to the wheel, as not believing a word of it.

Nick Froth is not invited to make the obliging promises he breaks; indeed, he allows nobody time to ask assistance, but anticipates even the wish with an offer. His pledges want nothing of excellence but redemption. His promises are always made in time; and then, in time, they are broken. When he has once passed his word, of this be sure—it will never overtake him. It was much too good a thing for so generous a fellow "to keep."

He is great at confounding a small party, where everything is going smoothly, with proposals to do something which, the instant they are assented to, as all his propositions must be, he discovers to be intolerable. He can throw things into inextricable confusion in two minutes. He is a famous hand at tripping-up a pleasure-trip. He begins by making all kinds of alterations; changing Crowns and Sceptres into Stars and Garters; getting Robinson and his wife left out, and somebody with two children invited; and he ends with keeping everybody waiting, and not coming after all.

But, disgusted as you may feel, your indignation at his arbitrary interference never reaches him; for before you can utter a word, he stops your breath with another proposal; perhaps his favourite suggestion, private theatricals; and when all the dresses are ready, and all the parts studied, he finds out in his capacity of self-appointed manager, that the thing can't be done. Comedy would be too dull, and tragedy too ludicrous. Besides, he has something quite prodigious on foot, and everybody is to be the first person to hear all about it.

When Nick Froth finds a family in committee of the whole house planning a comfortable hunt-the-slipper

party at home, he cannot forbear sweeping away the festive fabric at a breath, with the spontaneous impromptu offer of tickets for the magnificent masked ball on the very evening named. There are thirteen in family; but suppose there are seventy-five, Froth has tickets for all: yea, if he have a ticket for one: which, however, he has not.

But how punctually he drops in the day after the cruel disappointment, and how eagerly he now helps out the family project of a party; only positively overruling the hunt-the-slipper idea, and insisting that it must be made a blind-man's-buff proceeding. He promises to bring the great comic singer; and not only does not do it, but comes himself.

The nearest approach he ever makes to keeping a promise, may be not inaccurately measured by the trifling difference which exists between fulfilling an engagement by being present in person this evening at seven, and despatching a note to-morrow at three, explaining the ground of absence. He flatters himself that he is on such an occasion almost punctual, and as much to be relied upon as a gentleman ought to be.

"Nick's word is his bond" is the Froth cry all through the family, in conformity with the law which governs them, that they should puff one another. "He is such a safe, steady, punctual creature," cries Julia; "everybody trusts him; but I could not help telling Nick the other day, that if he has a fault, it consists in giving such hosts of promises, and making such myriads of engagements. I sometimes wonder how on earth he always contrives to keep his word!"

* * * * In the neighbourhood of the class not unfairly represented by the Froth family, we mingle with a much larger section of the community; persons who, although it cannot justly be said of them that they

never keep their word, are still far enough from the exclusive and elevated ground attainable by those who always keep it. Equally with the systematic and consistent word-breaker, to whom we have just bidden adieu, this new division of the trustworthy lays claim to implicit faith; and professes to merit high reputation for keeping the word of promise in all things, and matching the doing with the saying. Every member of this middle class professes to walk erect, in a straight line, and calls himself emphatically a man of his word.

He is a man of his word, with a reservation: he is conscience all over, when convenience is in the way.

The people whom we are now encountering, it is as well to be guarded against. They are very honest people, so long as the sun shines, and honesty can make hay. In the cold season, with nothing to do, they may be apt to thrust their hands into somebody's pocket to keep them warm.

They are readily known by the maxim current among them, and circulated in fact by way of boast, "I make it a rule to keep my word as far as I reasonably can." They are never heard to say, "I make it a rule not to make a promise without a reasonable chance of performing it." The good folks make the promise first, and then bethink themselves of what possibility there is of its fulfilment. They are often as good as their word, but then their word is often good for nothing.

There is Turningham, who goes on carrying everything before him, while he spins round a hundred times a day; whose way of life is but a winding about in every out-of-the-way direction. Turningham is persuaded, past all argument, that he is a man of his word, and would shoot any questioner of the fact without staying to challenge him; and yet he knows, as all his friends do, that his word is "false as water," "rash as fire."

He promises as he chooses, and performs agreeably to the same rule, which he conceives to be an equitable arrangement. His promise, if you want to obtain it, is almost a matter of certainty; his performance quite a thing of chance.

He never fled from his word, when it was agreeable or profitable to stand to it. He will redeem his pledge to the moment, provided it suits him. In other cases he has a stronghold to retreat to, in the doctrine that a promise which should never have been made it may be a greater virtue to violate than to fulfil. That he esteems to be a truth, and feels to be a comfort. He is never without his defence. He has a good reason for keeping his word, and does not like to have a worse for breaking it. This is with Turningham a matter of conscience. When you call upon him to fulfil a promise at his own manifest cost, with a sacrifice to virtue on the very face of it, he shrinks back; but it is only to turn crushingly upon you the next instant with the triumphant expostulation:

"It is all very well to call on me to keep my word! Will my word *keep me?*"

There is no answering this. From what rash pledge will not such reasoning release the Turninghams of our era!

Turningham is apt enough to recollect a positive promise as among the several reasons why he should do a certain act, but he recollects it last. When he has decided upon taking the step, and enumerated the various "becauses,"—as, because it will take him out of town, because it will please his relations in India, because he might make something by it, because it will bitterly exasperate his wife's uncle,—he adds at the end of the catalogue, "and besides, *I promised!*"

What should be the first grand motive asserting itself

at the outset, may thus serve as a sort of make-weight. The promise is in reality too often an after-thought, but it is brought in generally as a cap to the climax. The man of his word, who has luckily just remembered it, refers to it as a settler.

"Say no more; I promised, and it is done!"

But when the pledge given happens to lie, not along, but across the path of his convenience, what then is Turningham's argument? Suddenly the promise made appears in a different light; it by no means supplies a proof that the step proposed ought to be taken, and it is anything but equally binding as before. Turningham's cry is, "I always keep my word; always, as far as human power extends; but I never engage to control circumstances."

He draws himself up with vast moral dignity when any one reminds him of some omission of his; some lapse of memory which occasioned disappointment, reliance having been placed upon his word. "Do you suppose it possible that I could *forget* that promise? The non-fulfilment of it argued an impossibility in the case, but not such an impossibility as that. Assure yourself it was *not* forgotten!"

And this emphatic pledge, that the promise was remembered, is offered in full and touching atonement for its violation. In the firm conviction that Turningham never forgets his word once passed, the reason why he broke it nevertheless, is lost sight of; and he goes on to remark, with perfect impunity, "I always," &c.

But although all these people, the majority of the promising crowds who are about us everywhere, regard themselves as persons of their word, and are so to this extent—that they rarely perhaps break a serious promise without some little shabby show of an excuse for doing so—it is to be understood that the very best of them

reserve points to themselves on which they may break faith when they like; points on which no expectation of their fidelity is to be reasonably erected.

Of such a nature, in domestic and social life, are the promises constantly given and received to return home by a specified hour at night (in some families, sober). Lovers' vows, promises to pay, and pledges of unalterable friendship, are proverbially of the same order. Temperance-pledges have occasionally been known to partake of the same character; as, in political life, election-engagements and party-compacts most commonly do! To these, and such as these, it would be tedious to advert in detail. Every reader can reckon up a dozen cases of ordinary and regular occurrence in his existence, in which his conscience, hardened by custom, clearly exempts him from the penalties otherwise attached by sensitive and honourable minds to the broken vow; in simpler phrase, to the forfeit word; for the mere word should be the vow, the bare "I will," the bond.

The same cause forbids, as wholly superfluous, all allusion to promises of amendment made by servants discharged and afterwards taken back; and also in some establishments to intimations that their wages will be advanced by and bye, without specific mention of any quarter of the year, or indeed of the year itself. Carelessness may be converted to carefulness with wonderful celerity, but it is not judicious to trust the glass-breaker too soon with the new china; and the wages may actually be raised at Michaelmas for aught we can tell, but John had better not buy a new watch on the strength of the hint.

Whatever of lax morality may in all these matters be witnessed, and however the Turningham class of word-breakers may play the game of life with false dice, gene-

rally without thinking, often without knowing it; we have less to wonder at, when we call to mind that thousands of them every year reduce a sacred pledge to a form and ceremony, and tamper with the solemnity which should belong to such an obligation, when they lightly and readily step forward to "promise and vow three things" in the name of another, about the progress and accomplishment of which they do not afterwards profess to feel even the slightest real responsibility. Habit and example reconcile the most scrupulous to unconscientious usages, to ignorant perversions of reason, and gross abuses of sacred things; and without considering "too curiously" what is here glanced at, we may claim some charity even for the habitual violaters of a promise, some Christian toleration of their misdeeds, when we see the license accorded to our godfathers and godmothers.

Education's earliest lessons should implant in the mind a sense of the sanctity of a promise. A child should never hear of an oath; that fatal knowledge kills the innocent security in the simple word. If there were no necessity, real or supposed, for oaths, there would be no lies. When the child has learned that the simple word is not enough for the ends of truth, it has learned the first lesson of falsehood.

We proceed now to a "more removed ground," and breathe a clearer atmosphere among miracles of humanity; the people who *do* keep their word! What a fairy-land have we entered, and, God be thanked, it is not thinly populated either! This happy isle is not a paradise imagined for the few, as absentees suppose, but the home of living multitudes. Here we meet the persons, who, on the question of making promises, have many reservations, but on keeping them, none. Here we never encounter the kind accommodating fellow,

who, when he cries out "I shall certainly come," adds silently to himself, "if I can;" or him, who has no sensibility to wound, no dignity to lessen, when his careless tone suggests the expediency of the unpleasant question, "May I depend on you?" a question to which he, unoffended and unhurt, responds emphatically, "You *may*;" but only meaning thereby, that you live in a land of liberty, and have a will of your own. Here dwell not the indolent who make promises in order to avoid present trouble, and will engage to do impossibilities next week to get rid of a slight difficulty at the moment; nor do we here find the conventionally honest, who confound right and wrong, by holding that while they keep one class of promises, they are free to break another.

No; the only persons to be encountered in this region are of a different sort. A promise may not be easily drawn from them; but, once given, it will be kept. They are all of the same flesh and blood which united in the composition of that excellent officer, of whom complaint was made to the Great Captain during the war, that he had threatened to hang up an unhappy official by eight o'clock, unless before that hour he provided rations for the hungry soldiers; no rations being by human means procurable anywhere.

"Ha!" said the Duke, having heard the complaint, "did he say he would hang you? Then you had better have the rations ready, for he 'll keep his word!"

And yet even this example of presumed fidelity to the very letter of the word is no evidence of a uniformity in that respect, so as to constitute a character for conscientiousness. It may have been merely an instance of military etiquette, of professional punctilio, conscience in a red coat. The same virtue might not have exhibited itself in the same person at all, if out of the army; just as the private soldier whom we have heard of, though a

true lover of discipline and profoundly conscientious, might in a different character, and wearing another dress, have been quite incapable of that strict feeling of justice, which prompted him, having received half of his hundred and fifty lashes, and been taken down before the completion of his sentence, to go, as soon as he had recovered, to his colonel, saying, "I beg pardon, but there's five-and-seventy due to me yet!"

Let us suppose this conscientious soldier to be a scrivener, who had received in that capacity as many shillings above his account. Can we reconcile to imagination the image of the scrupulous man, returning to his client, and saying, cash in hand, "You have paid me all this too much?"

The thousand examples in the history of heroism, in redeeming the promise given, have chiefly had their origin in circumstances above the level of ordinary life, and involving an excitement favourable to the exhibition of fortitude and honour. Damon could do no less for Pythias, and Pythias was obliged to do what he did for Damon. There is nothing in it as evidence of character. Neither of them, perhaps, were men of their words. Damon would have kept his friend waiting dinner a cool hour, and Pythias would have promised the loan of his horse without fail, and then have ridden forth into Hyde Park himself.

Nelson conveys to the mind a forcible idea of the quality to be possessed by a keeper of his word. We decide at once that whatever he might *say*, he would *do*; but then this quality must be exerted professionally, and it would depend upon whether he said he would capture the enemy's fleet. There we should be surety for him at once that he would keep his word; not so, if he promised to win his rubber, though he held the cards in his hand.

It must be plain, that even among persons who always keep their word, there are differences of position and circumstance by which we are all moved to cherish preferences and prejudices, affecting our belief in their faithfulness. When a judge promises to hang a man, we are more apt to put faith in him than in a physician when he promises to cure one; yet both, perhaps, in themselves, are equally deserving of trust. Of two promises made by the very worthiest of our acquaintances; first, that he will come and dine with us, and, secondly, that he will call and pay the balance; we cannot, with the best of feelings, help relying more on one assertion than the other.

Where the plighted word is ever the same; sure of fulfilment, whether it refers to a momentous matter or the merest trifle; how must all who knew him recal the honoured and happy memory of Phil. Harper, late of London, philosopher Phil., the pliantest, and yet the stubbornest of mortals; the surest to attract, and the stoutest to resist; all inflexibility, all suavity; who never broke his word, and yet seemed to confer a favour while refusing to make a promise.

The stranger who might chance to look for the first time upon the mild and tranquil countenance of young Phil.—he was youthful-looking even in age,—would have decided that he might have been flurried into making any imaginable promise, and worried into breaking it as soon; but if the observer looked again, he detected traces of firmness of character, which made the simplicity in the face impressive, and its weakness formidable. Whatever there appeared at first view of lightness in the look, turned, on better acquaintance, to a gaze of power. Even his slight frame acquired an air of singular strength, as the quiet expression of his eye gained influence upon the beholder; and you then saw

that he was not only capable of extraordinary moral energy, but of undergoing great bodily labour and fatigue. The passiveness of his demeanour began, after a time, by some strange process, to imply a prodigious power of action; the fixed, unconquerable will made itself silently manifest through the gentleness and amiability of character that enveloped all; and the apparent youth, unguarded and undetermined, grew insensibly into the penetrating, self-possessed judge of his fellow-men, zealous to serve them, able to guide; of easy nature, it would appear, and yet immoveable by any pressure from without.

What glorious things he would undertake to do in a day! What a little book-full of promises he would make in the space of a morning! His spirit revelled in anticipation; it set itself troublesome tasks as though in pure sport, welcomed every comer so long as he came with a request in his mouth, and seemed inclined to say "Yes" to the whole petitioning world. It was quite impossible that he could do one-half he said; nay, so much had he undertaken, that he must necessarily forget the great matters, to begin with, and then hit upon the expedient of postponing the small.

Whosoever said that, knew nothing, you may be sure, of honest Harper. Although he might appear to toss and scatter his good words about like squibs and rockets, they were all written down somewhere in his head, in letters bright as sparks; sparks never destined to go out until the promise they recorded was performed, but then to be instantly extinguished.

He could no more forget the word he was bound to keep, than he could forget himself; a thing equally impossible to the generous or just man, as it is to the selfish one. Strangely the two extremes meet.

But one man can seldom be so ready to grant, as a

score are ready to beg. Phil. the good-natured, was well nigh lost and stifled in the centre of a beseeching crowd; a crowd convinced that it was but to ask and have. What a mistake! Where the spring flowed, behold a closed-up rock. Not a drop was to be extracted. No word of promise, though easily spoken, fed the empty ear of the listener. Phil.'s good-nature never ran to seed, breeding the rank weed deception. He would as readily descend to pass a forged note, as dream of offering a false promise, to patch some case of seeming necessity that must afterwards be all the worse for the counterfeit aid. He knew how to refuse, because he knew how to comply.

With what inveteracy he kept his word! "As right as the mail," in those old times, was a weak phrase with us. The security of Phil.'s word put all comparisons to shame. We amused ourselves sometimes with thinking how awkward it would be some evening, for some fair lady never met before, if Phil. Harper, in his straightforward honesty, should happen to step up to her at a ball, and make her a promise of marriage when she was off her guard, and before she could stop him.

Such a discharge of matrimonial artillery would, in ordinary cases, amount to nothing, to smoke, to a flash in the pan. Not so here. The bird would be brought down. The lady would most assuredly become Mrs. Harper. Nothing could save her, if he had once promised marriage. True, she might have an attached suitor in the next street; a lover, within a week of being her husband, in the refreshment-room at that moment; true also, she might be a widow in the first sable flush of her consternation and sorrow; nevertheless her name would infallibly be changed to Harper within the usual period known to calculators as no time. He must have broken his heart when he broke his word.

And what, had such a result come to pass; what if he had then chosen to whisper in the ear of his fair rejecter, the flinty-hearted falsifier of his innocent word; "My ghost shall haunt you!" There his promise to pay a visit to her bed-side, a promise payable at sight, must have been duly met. There at least she could not have foiled him. We would have taken such a ghost's word for more than a thousand. Cæsar's at Philippi could have been no greater example of supernatural punctuality. Phil. would have met her at Philippi, if he had said so.

These are grave considerations not to be avoided, when we are reflecting upon the propensities of people who *always* keep their word. Much as we wish them multiplied in the world, still they might breed—let us own to a rational fear—no little mischief here and there. As the world goes, when a savage who is nice about his honour threatens to horsewhip somebody, there is every prospect that the outrage will not be perpetrated, for the chances are that the threatener habitually lies; but in a community where truth prevails always, breaches of the peace must be alarmingly common. Many a gentleman who never tasted beaver (waterproof or otherwise) in his life, has given his word that he would eat his hat if something did not turn out which happened quite the other way; and when everybody shall keep his word we must prepare for strange spectacles; digestion will have enough to do.

Undertakings to send people to Jericho, though freely entered into, are never strictly observed; but that country under the new system would be thickly populated. The Irish reader will recollect the promise referred to in the affidavit of bodily fear put in by his nervous fellow-countryman in the usual form—that whereas the defendant had threatened to "break every

bone of this deponent, and send him to hell, which this deponent verily believes he would have done, but that," &c. Up to the present moment this is a solitary instance of faith reposed in a promise of that nature; but with people who always keep their word, the consequences would be appalling.

Phil. Harper entered into no such rash engagements; but went through life earning happiness and winning honour, simply by ever acting up to his word. Death came to him at length, but as the just and unreluctant redemption of an old pledge. Dying, he appeared to be only performing a promise tacitly given when he first opened his eyes upon the world.

And with the allusion to this kind of tacit pledge let us weave the remark that persons who always keep their word recognise in it more and more a sacredness beyond the letter of it, and are the first to feel that they are sometimes bound by a solemn contract, even where they have uttered no syllable in sanction of it. More promises are made than ever can be spoken. An angel ever in our company makes them for us.

This may be shown by the homeliest and most familiar example; by reference to a character known to everybody and beloved by no less a person. Burchell was a man who kept his word without making verbal promises. Witness that pleasant and touching incident in the prison, where the youngest of the ragged Primroses, to the dismay of his dear mother, is climbing up to Sir William's neck to kiss him: "'What, Bill, you chubby rogue,' cried he, 'do you remember your old friend Burchell? and Dick, too, my honest veteran, are you here? You shall find I have not forgot you.' So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast."

PERSONS WHOM EVERYBODY HAS SEEN.

1.—PERSONS WHO HAVE "GOT A SPIRIT."

It often happens that the man who has got a spirit, resembles the boy who has got his first shirt-collar; he is continually plucking it up. He thinks himself bound to display it; and it is of a quality so retiring, that if he should fail to pluck it up it never would be seen at all.

Life is hard work with him; for demands upon him to "show his spirit" are constantly occurring, and it has to be plucked up first. But his enjoyment is in proportion to his labour, for he is perfectly satisfied that he is ever and anon performing something heroic.

Thus after a long twelvemonth's toil at the forge or the desk; the poor man grinding his heart daily into sand for the old Hour-glass; pent-up, smoke-dried, choked, bent double; aching in every bone, and sick at the very soul; sentenced by the law of birth to perpetual imprisonment with hard labour; of a sudden a great resolution springs up in his mind, like the magic bean-stalk, in a single night—he conceives the great idea of a holiday, and going to Gravesend by steam! He plucks up a spirit, and puts down eighteenpence.

Or worse still; perhaps the bitterest ingredient in the cup of destiny is that sweet creature, a wife. He loves, honours, and obeys her; he is allowed to drink nothing but tea, and that always with her; he never presumes to go out without permission, stating always where he is going, and when he shall be back; he never so much as looks at another woman, except by his wife's direction, to notice some ugliness of feature, awkwardness of manners, or heresy in dress, which he

invariably detects, whether it be observable by other eyes or not;—when, in the very midst of the nag-nagging which is supposed to be sometimes the reward of such virtue, he starts up in open rebellion, seizes his hat at ten o'clock at night, darts out of doors, or windows, and returns home at dinner-time next day "much bemused with beer;" yet not so, for he had plucked up a "sperrit," as he calls it, and ordered strong ale.

Now and then, albeit he acknowledges some religious regulations which forbid it, he plucks up a spirit and sneaks to the play. He can only resent an insult by a like effort. He has been known to fling back an imputation upon his consistency or courage in very formidable language; and even went so far as to accept a challenge which was the consequence; happily, however, his spirit had not mounted high enough to present any obstacle to a peaceful arrangement upon moral grounds.

When reproached with subscribing a shabby one pound to a charity that had the strongest claims upon his extensive means, he resolved, after a fortnight's consideration, to increase his contribution to one guinea; because, as he said, he always liked to do things in a spirited manner.

It is not always, however, when he plucks up a spirit that he is helped forward by it even to this extent. The rich relation from whom he anticipates a fat legacy, one day screwed up the daily-affront-pipe to a pitch beyond mortal endurance.

"Now is the time," said outraged forbearance, "now is the time for me to pluck up a spirit!"

And forth he went, spirit and all, to buy a barrel of oysters to send to the fat legacy-leaver; with some capital H.B.'s, just out.

It is reported, moreover, that having always voted

upon one side in the borough he resides in, the other side at length offered him a bribe; upon which he immediately plucked up a spirit, and took it.

Flintz, the usurer, never plucked up a spirit but once in his life, and that was when he opened a bottle of wine, to treat a customer by whom he was making sixty per cent. But verily it *was* wine; rich, old, and cold as its owner! The customer remembered its rare quality eighteen months afterwards, when he called to negotiate another mortgage.

"Ah! Flintz, that was wine! Any more of it, eh?"

"Yes," there was a remnant of the old stock still left; and Flintz, after some delay, handed to his visitor a glass, *not* "full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene;" on the contrary, it was the vilest, sourest; but Flintz insisted that it was some of the same, and the visitor with many wry faces, refuted the libellous assertion.

"So much," exclaimed Flintz, "for that most affected of all pretensions to judgment—judgment in wine. You are sure it 's not the same! different quality, different vintage, different altogether! Now, sir, it happens to be the remains of the *same bottle;* and it has been here in my safe, under lock and key, exactly a year and a half."

The spirit that wants plucking up, is hardly worth having; but the spirit that is never down is a more troublesome incumbrance. Its owner had first shown his spirit at school, by bestowing upon a beggar, who was sure to make the good deed known, a half-crown which he purloined from another boy for that purpose. He next displayed it in a habit of thrashing his fellow-apprentice (the junior one) as often as he himself might incur correction from his master.

When he started in life, he started with spirit; that

is to say, having no money, he borrowed a large sum, and speculated with it. When he lost it, there were plenty of people to come forward with supplies enabling him to renew the game, because he had speculated in such a spirited manner; and afterwards, when he failed, everybody said that he had failed with great spirit. He set up a phaëton and pair, because the man next door set up a horse and gig; for it was not in his spirit to be eclipsed by a next-door neighbour; and when his business fell off to nothing, he purchased the said next house without money, and two others next to that on the same terms, throwing them all into one, and decorating them at the expense of several obsequious and extremely grateful tradesmen, who always like to see things done with spirit.

He is not remarkable for that mild temper, which is a terrible inconvenience to persons who have to show their spirit constantly. He is exceedingly tyrannical; but it should be admitted in justice to him, that he is chiefly so upon small points. He will quarrel ten times a day, but then it is sure to be on grounds not worth contesting at all; and though the battle may involve broken heads, the dispute is about the ninety-ninth part of a hair. Indeed, the pettier the cause of quarrel, the prouder is that feeling of inveterate firmness with which he holds to his text and scorns compromise; for the plain reason that he then most shows his spirit.

The phrases most frequently in his mouth are, "Thank Heaven, I've got a spirit!" "My spirit would never allow me to give way!" "That's just my spirit!" You may know him by either of these exclamations. The imp of the bottle had no such influence over its unlucky possessor, as this thing which he calls his spirit exercises over him. He is a slave, believing himself its master.

His favourite country is France; it is a nation that has got a spirit. He would be an excellent person to send out, as representative of one civilised country at the court of another. Civilised countries are fond of acting with extraordinary spirit.

If he should gamble away his children's bread, or steal the very wife out of his friend's bosom, he must not be denounced as the incarnation of treachery and wickedness. He has no hatred for his offspring, no love for the lady; but he moved in a certain society that required him to act with spirit.

When he shoots an acquaintance through the head instead of listening to reason, he is impelled by the same necessity. He must always drive very near the edge of the precipice, lest people should think he is afraid of driving over. However ill-mounted, he is bound to take the impracticable, neck-breaking leap in a steeple-chase, because the man with the better horse has just taken it with prodigious spirit.

Deduct from the huge sum-total of mischief and misery in the world the amount fairly chargeable to the principle of acting with "spirit," whether between nations, between classes, between man and man, or man and wife, and at the end of a single twelvemonth you would accumulate a stock of original sin and suffering, large enough to set up a new world twice the size of this.

2.—PERSONS WHO NEVER HAVE ENOUGH OF A GOOD THING.

NAPOLEON seemed to be of opinion, that, to deserve well of her country, a woman could not have too many children; and if all sovereigns were Napoleons, the opinion would be perfectly just. As it is, there happens to be considerable doubt upon the point, as well in

states as families; but it by no means follows, while admitting the possibility of a superabundance of blessings in the nursery, that we should concur with that scamp of a soldier in Farquhar's comedy, who thinks it possible that a man may have "too much wife."

Of many other good things, however, "too much" is easily to be had. We need not allude to those gross material excesses, of which five-shilling records are magisterially made in the morning. Every one who has been once tempted to taste the other something; every one whose cheek has flushed over the one cool bottle more, will eagerly admit that it is needless. If they hesitated, we should produce to their confusion the evidence of the little bluecoat-boy, who dining at home one day with his brothers and sisters, astonished them with the splendour of his appetite, and yet was worried to take more. More! no, that was impossible. Nature that abhors a vacuum, abhors equally three pints to a quart vessel. Yet he was sorely pressed, and naturally anxious to gratify affection.

"Well," said the brave little fellow at last, looking fondly, wishingly, and yet half-despairingly at the dish —his heart was full, we may be sure—"Well, perhaps if I *stand up*, I can!"

It was an acute thought of the boy's: we should rather say, perhaps, it was a beautiful instinct. And a noble effort too it was that he then made; he stood up to it, almost as Thomson stood up to the peaches; but it was a graceful heroism thrown away; he couldn't.

Let it be a lesson to others how they aim at the prohibited enjoyment, too much of a good thing. When they have been round to a lady's friends, and duly circulated the story of her intended elopement; when they have *What-a-pity'd* it in one family, *No-wondered* it in another, and *They-do-say'd* the victim's reputation

everywhere, let them go home and get a little refreshing sleep after their charitable labours, without troubling themselves to write a kind note of sympathy, by way of communicating the tidings to the lady's mother; because this is really too much of a good thing.

And when they next get hold of a famous joke—an entirely new anecdote of George Canning, or the last original repartee of a more rēverend wit—let them by all means, as usual, relate it at full length to the next dozen persons whom they meet, in regular succession; but let them forbear to repeat it to the said dozen when all assembled together; as though every one of them had not been separately and privately tortured, and with a genuine anecdote which each claims, perhaps, to have exclusively manufactured.

These retailers of good things fancy that civil listeners never can have enough of them. The civility is partly in fault; there is too much of it.

These are the advocates of "wasteful and ridiculous excess," who would like to gild refined gold, and paint the lily. They think "Paradise Lost" so fine, that they wish there was more of it: a few more books, and it would have been delightful: and then they go and read all that has been written about it, to eke out the poet's abbreviated spells. They are of opinion that a poem is nothing without a vast volume of notes. When they have read Burns all through, they sit down to read the glossary, which they enjoy prodigiously. If they had seen Kemble in "Macbeth," they would have made a rush homeward to read his essay upon the character, by way of heightening their enthusiasm. They maintain that "The Wanderer" eclipses all modern novels, because it extends to five volumes.

They are the people who, at the play, sit out two farces after seeing the tragedy, encoring a comic song

in the last piece, and calling for "God save the Queen" at the close. At the opera they are for having everything repeated, beginning with the overture; they call for the principal singers to appear between every act, and three times at the end, to abide the pelting of a floral storm. When the ballet begins, they begin to encore; when it terminates, they are lost in wonder why people don't encore, not the brilliant points merely, but the ballet; they are of opinion that *two* such pieces, with an opera in *five* acts, would form a charming evening's entertainment, not a bit too long.

A book is no book to them unless embellished "with numerous engravings," and no advance of price. A newspaper must be as large as a London-tavern table-cloth, or there is nothing in it. They must have too much of a good thing, or they fancy they have not enough. Whether they are in favour of two-hour sermons is more doubtful. We never heard them express a wish that the parliamentary debates were lengthened.

3.—PERSONS WHO "KNOW ALL ABOUT IT."

WHEN people draw their chairs close to the fender, stir the fire vigorously, rub their hands upon their knees, assume a look of complacent sagacity, and proceed to open up a long story with the confidential remark that they are going to tell us "all about it," they oftentimes remind us—dull companions though they be—of that outrageous and incomprehensible piece of drollery of Foote's, which the wise reader who loves genuine nonsense never forgets:

"So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage to make an apple-pie, and who should be coming down the street but a great she-bear and popp'd her head into

the shop. What! no soap?—So he died; and she very imprudently married the barber. And there were present the Joblilies, and the Garruyillies, and the Piccalilies, and the great Panjandrum himself with the little round button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch-us-as-catch-can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots."

There is only one suitable termination for stories of this simple and lucid character, and it is that which custom always has ready—"and so now you know all about it."

Where there are a great many facts to relate, with great anxiety to pour them out all at once, a little crowding and confusion must be considered excusable. But it is frequently much the same where there is but a solitary fact to disclose; for then the innocent meaning falls a victim to the turbulent rushing of a mob of words. Thus the spirit of the "great Panjandrum with the little round button at top," breathes intensely in the following—the opening passage of a printed circular which a learned schoolmaster in the City lately addressed to the authorities of Aldgate.

"Gentlemen,—Thank you for the unbounded confidence which you have placed in my management during a period of six years and upwards, in every part of which I may fearlessly assert the faithful discharge of an arduous duty. Circumstances not less to my prosperity than, under the blessing of God, to my happiness, induce me to this otherwise unpleasant task: but, should that which I have glanced at not be the reality anticipated, then I am sure it will be highly gratifying to learn that it is ascertained, more by the frequent observation of others, than my own experience, that a considerable fortune awaits me in another profession."

The writer not only intended to resign, but he

intended to say so, only the great Panjandrum would not let him. When schoolmasters thus flourish in print, who can wonder that pupils persist in playing the game of catch-us-as-catch-can until the gunpowder runs out at the heels of their boots!

You may know the man who means to tell you all about it, directly his countenance comes in view. His cheeks are puffed out with words "that breathe," and his eyes are distended with thoughts "that burn" to find utterance. His appearance is that of a man who must tell his story at once or explode. To be still talking, as Beatrice says (only not, like Signor Benedick, to the purpose), is the necessity of his nature. (Truly, his is more the vein of Dogberry, who must have been prodigious at the game of telling a simple listener all about it.) Yet when you come to hearken, you find he has nothing to tell. He has plenty of passages leading nowhere, and they are all "to be continued."

He is for ever wandering in a maze, conducting you all about, but not out of it; he is coming to a sure exit at every fresh turn, and yet is always where he was. He never finds out the right track but to lose himself in it, and misses his way only to feel all the more confidence in his own cleverness. He is continually busy in disclosing vast secrets, not a word of which does he ever communicate; and is eager to offer you the clearest explanations, which never can be explained themselves.

He is the original of Sheridan's interpreter, who was the more difficult to understand of the two. He never spoke without saying too much, and yet never said anything in his life. When he tells you all about it, it is about the shell of the nut, which he never cracks—and you hear not a word touching the kernel. He resembles the old riddle, "Round the house, and round the house, without touching the house." His wits, like Iago's,

are "about it," but the invention never comes from his pate at all, and if it did, there are no brains to pluck out. He is a spendthrift in words and a miser in meanings. He must needs go beating about the bush, when he knows all the time there is no game there.

Life is too short to warrant the expenditure of a single hour upon the remorseless prolixities of these round-about ramblers. Their yarns are like the Irish sailor's long line of rope, of which somebody had "cut off the other end," so that pull in as he might there was no coming to it.

"Grant me patience, just Heaven!"

Yes, we have all need of it, only grant me not enough to listen away my little lifetime in an easy-chair, sleepily nodding assent to the never-ending monotonous hum of the daily drawler, as he perseveres in telling one "all about it."

If he have anything to say before he dies, let him say it. Every man has a right to address his fellow-creatures before he is turned off; but he has no right to cheat me of my morning, because he is doomed for his sins to get rid of his own.

If he have a romance to relate, let him introduce at once his bore of a monk, or beast of a baron, without stopping a long hour to "gild the western hemisphere." If his tale bear date the 19th of October, let him state the fact; and not indulge in an insufferable dissertation upon that bleak autumnal season, when the leaves of the forest, &c., like human hopes, &c., suggesting lessons of mortality, &c.

If he *must* tell us something about John Smith, let him at least allow John Smith's father to sleep quietly in the grave, and not rip up ancient grievances by beginning like those abominable nuisances, the brown-coated old baronets on the stage, with "Let me see,

it is now exactly twenty-three years ago this day, since——"

If the gentle Howard himself had failed to hiss furiously at this point, he would have proved himself more fool than philanthropist.

Above all, if he have only the regular bit of daily news, the appropriate morning gossip to communicate; why, out with it. Has Beau Tibbs gone into the bench? say so simply. Has old Sir Peter Teazle's wife run away with Doricourt? there are just ten words necessary, with one note of admiration.

Grant that they have had "goose three days running" at No. 6; that Hicks's man has been taken up for swindling; that the nurse-maid opposite has got another clean clerk to walk round the corner with; and that the Bolts have gone away in the night: still there is no necessity for a volume upon each incident, the incident itself being after all left out of the volume.

Tell us the event, if you must; but spare us "all about it." We shall not stint the man of brevity in his choice of subjects. He shall tell us that a relation of ours is going to be hanged, or that a friend has met with a piece of great good luck; the unwelcome news shall not sour our temper. He shall announce the loss of our foreign scrip, the death of a favourite dog, or the return of a tyrannical dowager to our tranquil domicile when least wanted; we shall not wince much, if the tale be not long. Nay, he shall gently intimate that the income-tax is doubled, fourteenpence in the pound; but unless he would see an image of

> "Moody madness laughing wild
> Amidst severest woe,"

let him not aggravate the injury by telling us in cold blood all about it, or affecting to explain the terrible mystery of the schedules.

The witness-box is often an excellent place for the display of "Knowledge under no Difficulties." There you continually meet with people, who are prepared at a moment's notice, whatever the case may be, to tell his worship all about it. Bring them to the point, however, his worship cannot, although he is many times assured that "that's what they're coming to." They know everything and everybody, except the circumstances of the affair, and the parties about whom they are interrogated. They saw nothing done and they heard nothing said; but they have been informed by one whose name they don't know, that something did take place, and they have certain thoughts of their own which are much at everybody's service. This is what they call knowing all about it.

The same phrase is in use, by a similar class of persons, at the hustings and at public meetings: where, directly a speaker, blessed with lungs and listeners, declares that the question of wool, timber, sugar, or corn, then and there agitated, has been utterly misunderstood, and he shall make bold to tell that intelligent audience for the first time all about it; you know your fate. If you have nothing to do, go and do it, but stay not there, unless the great Panjandrum with the little round button at top be the god of your idolatry.

If these knowing persons would be content with their knowledge, all would be well; but knowledge is power, and people who have power love sometimes to exercise it unmercifully. Thus, we cannot mention the philosopher's stone, but we find they know all about it. Shift the conversation to every opposite subject in turn, from Pompey's pillar to the songs of Ossian, the round towers of Ireland, the late mysterious murder, the Homeric birthplace, the last of the antediluvian turnups, or the authorship of Junius's letters; and in every

successive instance, wherever a field is opened for doubt, or a mine of speculation and research is sprung, it invariably happens that they know all about it. Should you relate a private dream which you had last night, or invent a chain of impossibilities expressly for the occasion, you find them equally foreknowing, and can only wonder in what profound depth they picked up the information.

They have always an exclusive story of their own, which is, like a worn-out shilling, without head or tail to it. Every story, nevertheless, is furnished with two heroes, one is a cock and the other a bull; and these are constantly in one another's way.

If ignorance be bliss, verily each of these persons might be supposed to cry, "Me miserable!" On the contrary, to the confusion of the melancholy sons of wisdom, they are the happiest dogs living.

4.—PERSONS WHO ARE NEVER WITHOUT AN EXCUSE.

It is almost a proverb in the land that you can never catch a woman without an excuse ready made, be her surprise or her emergency what it may. Rosalind tells us that we shall never catch a woman without her answer; and the brilliancy and affluence of *her* "woman's wit," confirming her own confident assertion of its unfailing qualities in her sex, almost establishes her case. But it must be recollected, on the other hand, that all sweet Rosalind's pearls and diamonds can never shed a single ray of light that may show us how to estimate truly the riches of a woman's resources in that respect; for this simple reason, that Rosalind is not the author of the play, and that, in reality, her "woman's

wit" is the wit of a man; if, indeed, we can bring ourselves to think of Shakspeare as only *one*.

If women have at command a greater store of pertinent answers and apt excuses than men, it is only another proof that wealth is often heaped where it is almost superfluous. As her fewer faults require fewer excuses than our large batch of grosser sins, so again she less needs the resource of an excuse, in virtue of that consideration and indulgence with which we habitually regard the smaller foibles of her character; her little every-day transgressions, which brutal husbands alone call "whoppers."

Perhaps it was her reputed superiority in the art of making excuses, that by degrees suggested to vast numbers of the sex she rules ("rules," so long as she doesn't "show she rules") the expediency of cultivating it to the utmost, of employing it as an invaluable ally. At all events, we now live in the heart of a great world, which, want what it may, never wants an excuse. The exemption conceded to all kings is claimed by most subjects; who "can do no wrong," because each in his own personal case is ready to prove it right. Every individual atom of the sovereign people becomes upon this plan an imperial Cæsar, and, we know,

"Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause."

That's just it. We never do wrong but upon right principles, and never commit a fault without an excellent reason for it. The justice of our cause vindicates the injustice of our deeds; and the purity of our motives covers the grossness or want of charity of our speech.

Among our law-makers, high and low, the art of excuse-making is carried to perfection. An act repealed, or an act passed, may be in itself an ill deed; not so, if it can happily boast a good excuse. The change might not be just—what then? It was expedient.

You will as soon catch a tortoise without his shell as a minister without his excuse; it is his case-armour, and, worn guardedly, he is seldom crushed in it. He never wanted an excuse for promoting a public servant, or for neglecting one; he has an excuse for giving away a place, or for refusing it; or for promising without the slightest intention of giving. He has a capital excuse for peace, and a sound one for war. He has his excuses for office, and his excuses for opposition.

The bewildered patient, hearty last week, dies amidst a countless multitude of phials and pill-boxes; but the M.D. has his excuse—the obstinate man would have the wing of a partridge for his dinner; besides, his disease was evidently mortal—look at him, and you see the fact in his face.

The client walks out of court, winning his cause but losing his land; the lawyer has his excuse—the estate was only just large enough to pay the costs of suit.

The dramatist writes a tragedy and fails, but he has his excuse—the acting was execrable. And the actor who played so villanously, he has his excuse too—Garrick would have been hooted in the part, and have felt his genius in such a play buried in a leaden coffin.

Two classes of characters (extremely numerous ones) are especially famous for excuses. The man who, when asked, does not mean to lend his money; and the man who, when he has borrowed, does not mean to pay it back. The fertility of invention and the dexterity of fence displayed here are incessant and surprising; there is a continual play of genius on both sides, and it is difficult to say in which party is vested the greatest ingenuity, or the most unwearied perseverance. The firmness and fortitude of human nature are in either character worked up to the utmost.

The rich have an excuse for giving nothing away—

the dread of encouraging rogues; and the poor offer at least as good a reason for not paying their debts—they have no money.

The man with the gout—what is his excuse for taking turtle twice?

"Oh, why it was sent to me; and then that fellow Jones had it three times; moreover, I'm fond of it."

And he who staggers from the half-upset table and reels home on both sides of the road at midnight, has he no excuse for the drunkenness which is delicately phrased down into inebriety? Oh, certainly; he had met with the best friends in the world, and hadn't an idea that whiskey-punch affected the head; thought the port really capital, and was inclined to blame the bottled stout; the excuse for being drunk generally ending with the emphatic appeal, "And besides—besides, mind —I'm s—s—sober."

The drinker's excuses, however, are innumerable. If it were of any use to attempt an enumeration, we should say that they run—1st. That it is ungentlemanly to pass the bottle. 2dly. That it is the anniversary of his wedding-day, of his marriage with his first wife. 3rdly. That his heart is *almost* broken. 4thly. That he only drinks at night to enable him to relish his plain glass of porter next day. 5thly. That he has one wife and six children weighing heavily on his mind. 6thly. That he is writing a volume of poems. 7thly. That these are not times for a patriot to flinch from supporting the revenue. 8thly. That his heart is *quite* broken. 9thly. That he cannot tell whether it is to be a girl or a boy. 10thly. That he means to start for America, being sick of the United States in England, &c.

The very apostle of temperance is not without an excuse for an outbreak. It was Father Mathew's birth-

day; or there must have been something in the water that he drank after supper—not a doubt of it.

Indeed, the only thing for which there is no excuse is—to be under any circumstances without one.

The daily journals, those acres of paper, are thickly sown with excuses for human nature, in all its infinite forms of meanness, venality, and crime. Their motto should be "Whatever is, is right." There the judge excuses an excessive punishment, not that the offence demands it, but that the state requires an example. There the culprit puts in the plea of poverty, in answer to the charge of theft.

There the honourable member excuses his bribe on the ground that the other side bribed quite as high, and his broken promise to a constituency on the ground that a system of pledges is injurious to public morals.

The defrauded tradesman excuses his own carelessness, rather say his own willingness to be cheated; the bankrupt was so smooth-spoken, and went regularly to the same parish church. The fraudulent bankrupt in turn finds an excuse for his frailty in the intense force of domestic affection; his wife had a passion for point lace and a drive in the parks, while his children would never have got through their measles comfortably, unless indulged with a promise of real French dancing-masters on their recovery.

The beauty of virtue is (this is rather a new doctrine) that it is so exceedingly profitable. One bit of true virtue stops the gaps created by the detection of several vices. The girl who drops her master's child out of a second-floor window in the morning, and innocently sets the house on fire at night, is excused by the general verdict of the family; she is so extremely modest, and never stops to chat with the policeman. The footman who, having stolen the plate and carried off the cash

which he was to have taken to the coal-merchant, is found senseless at the Bag-o'-nails, is not without his excuse; it was all owing to his devoted attachment to "that creature" who is a disgrace to her sex, and utterly unworthy of such a man. One virtue goes a great way; but a mere half-dozen vices count for nothing.

Even the lady who elopes from her lord finds more favour than is openly accorded to her. It turns out that she was three years younger than her husband; that she was sometimes left for the same number of hours at home while he who should have been her protector and companion was seeking enjoyment (talking politics) at the neighbouring tavern; and that Mr. Lungs, the lodger, had a surprising voice for "Is there a heart!" It must be an ill-wind indeed that blows nobody an excuse.

The faithful husband has numerous excuses for stopping out late. One is, of course, the politics aforesaid. The next seldom fails to appear, though it rarely succeeds; he positively had no idea of the time. Thirdly, he waited for that Tomkins, who was coming his way; and never again will he wait a single instant for an unscrupulous sitter-up who has no wife and family, or at least no wife, to go home to. Then there was somebody in company who began to talk in the most admiring and affectionate strain of little Lucy (the disturbed wife's darling), and for his life he could not tear himself away. Then somebody else had detained him by the offer of a box at Covent-Garden, which certainly would afford a rare treat to the dear children. Afterwards he had staid a little; could he help that? to return thanks upon his wife's health being drunk, which toast the Rev. Mr. Jobbins had most feelingly proposed. And lastly, for even a string of excuses has its lastly, there was not a cab to be got. Yet, after all, he must frankly confess

that he does not very seriously repent of his long stay, since he finds his Juliana in such a kind forgiving temper, and looking as fresh as a lark!

With the myriads of small excuses for small crimes committed momently a volume would in an hour or two be filled. Sins of omission, with respect to morning-calls and answering notes, afford a field which produces daily a large crop of excuses. We know a young lady whose innocent excuse for not writing was, that she did not know the day of the month. Her pedigree might possibly be traced back to the time of the ancient matron, who stated in excuse for the badness of her spelling, that she wrote the letter with a bad pen.

And really in an age when all kinds of excuses are freely admitted, and allowed to pass current without question, this should be as fair an excuse as may be adduced by an author for the insufficiency of his argument, or the feebleness of his imaginative flight. That he wrote his essay, or his epic, with a bad pen, should at once account for all blots. Should the consistent critic, jealous of innovation, still persist in abusing the work, he too might, in due and convenient season, produce his honest excuse, that he had never read a line of it.

Charles Lamb once gave a kind of pattern-excuse for appearing at a wedding in a black coat; yet a little bird had been before him. It was, if we remember, the excuse of the blackbird for appearing at the goldfinch's wedding in a sable suit; that he had got no other. The apology, founded upon such an extreme necessity, may serve to give the authority of an excuse to the many (the antipodes of the Charles Lambs of the world) who perpetually parade their one virtue before the public eye; whether it be their sobriety, their chastity, their horror of vice, or a supreme concern for the interests of their family—"they have got no other."

It is hardly consistent with a virtuous feeling to be hard upon a solitary virtue; yet this we may venture to say, that while for some positive vices, constituted as life is, some excuses may be found, we meet now and then with a case of singleness of virtue for which there is no excuse. Virtue however is much less prolific than her sister; weeds are of quicker growth even than flowers (weeds and flowers, vice and virtue, have paired off ever since the date of paradise).

And this reflection leads to the observation with which we close; that daily reviewing, though vainly attempting to enumerate the world's multitudinous excuses as well for grave as trivial transgressions, we see upon what a grand scale Vice, by her agent Hypocrisy, pays her homage to Virtue. When we observe with what energy men labour to bury their offences from the common eye, with what dexterity they cloak their more venial trespasses, with what a degree of artifice they put on the smile in place of the scowl, and yet with what constancy they pursue the old game only to give themselves new trouble, we must come to the conclusion that intellect is more tasked to make human character appear what it is not, than to be what it was designed for. The first lesson we derive from social life is, that it is far less anxious to narrow the boundaries of vice than to discover passable excuses for it; to mask rather than to discard the grossness which weighs down the spirit.

5.—PERSONS WHO JOKE AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE.

Among the multitudes who hourly joke, after a fashion, at their own expense, may be classed a certain set of Self-depreciators, who are possessed of a very

spurious kind of modesty. It is often, indeed, but a mere joke, and they find it an expensive one.

They put on a diffident air, and undervalue themselves, with the view of heightening the bystander's estimate of their worth; but they never succeed in this, for as long as they decry their own merits, he is sure to take them at their word. They may exalt their pretensions, and cry up their own capabilities to the skies, but he believes not a syllable they say; not so, when they lower their tone, even beneath the pitch of truth, and pronounce themselves incapable; then they are entitled to implicit faith.

A poet sends you his last sonnet, which he frankly proclaims to be a fine one, and the best he ever wrote; but as you are not bound to agree with him, you reject his judgment. When, on the other hand, he shows you some verses acknowledging them to be commonplace, his judgment influences yours, and you confess that there is not much in them. The law of opinion allows an author to give evidence against himself, but holds him in contempt as a witness in his own behalf.

Declare that you are a great philosopher, and the world, without knowing anything to the contrary, will uncivilly dispute your assertion; but call yourself a great fool, and the world, still knowing nothing about you, will politely concur.

If self-glorification seldom succeeds, self-depreciation fails yet more frequently. The Fabian policy should be rarely tried in the moral field. Men are not allowed to carry on an argument by retreating from the point, nor can they gain a reputation for firmness and courage, by prevarication and sneaking. We know that when a man proclaims aloud his iniquities, and arrogates to himself every vice and vanity known to the enlightened world, that he means to set himself up for a saint; but

we do not, therefore, think him one. On the contrary, we esteem him to be the sinner he says he is, or else a hypocrite still more detestable. The wise man well knows what a shallow thing his wisdom is; but he does not begin his discourse by telling us that he is a goose.

The beauty, with an admiring glance towards the glass, tosses her elegant head, and vows that she is looking shockingly to-night; and do we not, contrary to her intention, silently coincide, as we see the silly affectation obscuring all that was pleasing in her face, and turning the lovely into the laughable?

And when the musical lion of the party entertains a crowd of besiegers for half an hour with protestations that he can't sing a note, he is more in the right than he means to be; for when he afterwards complies, do we not listen as to one, not singing, but showing off?

The modesty is sometimes real, but it is equally fatal. Indeed, real modesty is a virtue to which we show no quarter. When once an unhappy mortal turns critic upon himself, and begins to point out his own faults with sincerity, we let him go on, and are not satisfied while he leaves himself a single fragment of merit to grace his unworthiness. He may strip, till he has stripped himself down to the thin, bare, hollow quality of temperance; and we expect him to confess, then, that he retains the one virtue, only while the cellar is locked, or the purse empty. It places the victim absolutely at our mercy; there is a greater generosity in our friendship for one so erring and desertless.

Let the truly modest man (has he come to town yet?) declare upon the singleness of his reputation, whether, as often as he has mistrusted his own powers, he has not found his well-wishers mistrust them too. We are immodest enough to answer for him, that whenever he has pleaded his low deserts, his rewards have been in

proportion. Let a man of five feet nine inches confess, with an humble stoop in the shoulders, that he considers himself short, and his friends will look upon him as Little Dobbs ever after. Directly we regard ourselves as below the average, we never get credit for our full height: the instant we have uttered, in humble selfishness, the fatal words, "Anything will do for me," anything does for us in everybody's eyes.

Justice should take a hint from charity, and begin at home. Hers is a feast, where every guest ought to help himself; but then so many have a habit of taking too much.

There is one exception to the rule remarked upon. There is one vice (for practically it is a vice) of which we do not always believe a man guilty even upon his own confession. It is poverty. When he avers that he is poor, we think him sly and roguish, or perhaps modest and ostentatious. We accept with full credence his self-depreciatory list of the things he can't do, but we are reluctant to believe that he *can't pay*, somehow. We make the modest man try.

Turning to a more literal view of the subject, we see a class of persons who are fond of the amusement of throwing stones about, quite in fun; and it is remarkable that these persons live in glass-houses. Half the stones fall about their own ears, and for every second joke they have a long bill to pay. Their rockets have a knack of bursting brilliantly—in the hand. Life's a jest; and they must make a joke of it.

They are not far removed from the practical Christian philosopher, who burnt down his neighbour's house to roast his own egg at the fire. These pleasant jokers demolish their own tenements; but whose beside, they never stop to consider. Off goes the joke; the withering sarcasm, the slanderous innuendo; or the

random shot, in sheer sport, to bring down anything it may happen to hit. The joke, often injurious, sometimes fatal to others, is ever so to themselves. It might seem harmless at the moment, but a latent mischief in it explodes unexpectedly.

The friend at whom it was levelled only lost his temper, which might be a very bad one; but the joker, perhaps, has lost his friend. He hurt an acquaintance, or a stranger, but struck down himself beyond the hope of rising. The bystanders judge him, not by the mischief done, but by the mischief meditated, or by the indifference to mischief manifested in the aim. Even in the opinion of those who laughed loudest at the sally, he stands, upon deliberation, condemned. His stone-throwing is the opposite of that which the frogs appealed against; here the sport is for the many, but it is lingering death to the one, the author of the joke.

Some of these jokers at their own expense are simply the victims of ill-luck. They playfully start the wrong subject; felony in the presence of the gentleman who forgot to return his friend's snuff-box, borrowed direct from the dining-table; female frailty, in the teeth of a nine-days' deserted husband; or the merits of a particular club to the blushing face of a candidate just blackballed. He finds his innocent remarks resented as insults. His little crackers leap back upon him with the force of bomb-shells. He thinks the thing must be a joke, and explains jestingly; which turns the serious drama to deep tragedy.

The jokers comprise many classes, and the expense is heavy in all. They congregate numerously at Newmarket and Epsom, where the joke of backing the wrong horse, he that is dead lame and yet as right as the mail, is kept up at a bountiful rate. The expense in the long run, that is, in the turn of the race-course,

is sure to fall heaviest upon the best jokers. The knowing ones always know one thing—who is most cruelly taken in.

The civic gamblers are droll fellows too; droll upon the same disinterested principle. They will have their jokes at their own expense; they are so devilish independent. They always like to pay for what they have, if it be only a joke. They never fall so readily and completely into a trap, as when it is one of their own setting.

The swarms who live well without any money at all; who want for nothing in this world of luxury except cash, and to whom, therefore, even that is a superfluity; who dance away their days without once paying the piper; may seem to be joking at other people's expense. It is eventually at their own. As certainly is it the case with criminals who plunder *not* according to law. If there be anything sure and sacred in our belief, this must be included in it; that no man can rashly or wilfully injure his fellow man, without more deeply injuring himself.

Evasion of the law is held in some cases to be a good joke, as open violation of it is in others; the offenders, at the wind-up of the intricate account, suffer most by the jest. Some laws themselves are but mere jokes; grave ones it is true; but they are maintained at the law's expense. It is the law that suffers most by them, in public estimation, and practical efficiency; for the ruin inflicted upon individuals is as nothing compared with the great national calamity, the awful contradiction, a wrong done legally!

5.—PERSONS WHO "DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO."

THE Helpless constitute a large class of human beings in town and country; but amongst them is a species of mortal who is helpless with an abundance of means at command. It is a feminine class, with a masculine sprinkling; and there is an infallible characteristic by which all who belong to it may be recognised; they never know what to do!

These unhappy persons are constantly rocking about in smooth water. They are perplexed with a choice of enjoyments, or a profusion of business. Their poverty is the embarrassment of riches. You find them in a state of pitiable perplexity; and it turns out that they have a box at Drury Lane and a box at Covent Garden for the same evening. They are at a loss to decide which theatre to go to; they don't know what to do!

Having a perfectly idle morning, they are plunged into a most distressed condition by the difficulty of determining whether it would be best to make a call on the Greens at Greenwich, or the Browns at Blackheath. Suggest to them that they might do both, and they feel dreadfully fatigued at the very thought; suggest that they should do neither, and they declare that they shall die if they are moped up much longer. When they have rejected every hint you have to offer, and no new course can be proposed, they look up appealingly in your face, and in plaintive tones inquire, "What would you advise?"

This "what would you advise?" a question in constant use amongst the Helpless with help at hand, is generally addressed to somebody manifestly incapable of forming an opinion upon the point. But that is of little consequence, as the advice is never followed.

The birthday present which they intended to make is postponed until next year, from the utter impossibility of deciding whether it should be one diamond and three rubies, or one ruby and three diamonds. They insist upon knowing at last what the poor old blind grandfather thinks, who never had a taste for jewellery, and they resolve to be governed by his judgment. He is for three rubies and one diamond.

"And yet," they urge in reply to this final decision, "don't you think now that one ruby and three diamonds— ?"

The point is not settled, and they refer the solution of the difficulty to foolish Betty, with her abominable taste for finery; but when her all-important opinion is obtained, she is told that she is a very bad judge of such matters, and quite in the wrong.

"Why, yes, of course, ma'am, as I said before, you must know best."

But Betty is wrong again, they don't know best. They never were so completely puzzled. It's so extremely provoking. If it were not for a diamond and three rubies, a ruby and three diamonds would be beautiful. They can't tell, it makes them quite miserable, they don't know *what* to do!

They are for ever paying visits, first to Tweedledum, and next to Tweedledee, in order to collect different opinions; and when they have collected all, they are confirmed in the suspicion they had previously entertained, that it is really very difficult to know what to do.

They would leave town immediately, but for a desire to remain in London, where however they are disinclined to stop, from a great wish to go out of town. And in starting for the country, they would certainly go by railroad, were it not for the charms of the sea, of which however they are not inclined to take advantage, in

consequence of the convenience of the railroad. They have nobody to advise them, and what on earth they *shall* do they don't know.

And should a little difficulty really rise, should it so happen that it is highly important for them to pay a visit immediately, and as highly important, at the same time, that they write some letters which will cause delay, then, indeed, like the miserable Moor, they are "perplexed in the extreme," and cry out, with the bewildered rustic in Fielding's "Fall of Phaëton,"

"The world's at an end! go and call the parson of the parish!"

In such a complex crisis of their affairs, in such an extremity of helplessness, they can neither pay a visit nor write a note. They can but sit down, wring their hands, look inquiringly at the ceiling, and wonder *whatever* they shall do!

DECEASED PEOPLE WHOM WE MEET DAILY.

An Irish gentleman of our acquaintance, when his new suit of mourning came home, began to moralize on the uncertainty of life. "Mortality," said he, "is more fleeting than the fashion of a coat. Who can say that his spirit may not cast off its garment of flesh, even before the gloss has departed from his new waistcoat. Alas! I ordered this mourning for my friend, and may yet be destined to wear it for myself!"

We often laugh in the wrong place, and create the bulls we fancy we discover. It was easy to see, by the aid of a minute's reflection, that this was no blunder at all, except in sound. On the surface it is merely a ludicrous absurdity; beneath that lies a world of grave

meaning, and lessons of the profoundest and most melancholy truth. The provocation to laugh is checked by a philosophic sigh.

It is not, to be sure, the custom in civilised countries for men to go into mourning for their own loss; they only put on the suit of sorrow and solemnity when royalty, consanguinity, or friendship that leaves a legacy, expires; but if it were the fashion for honest people in this world, to do by themselves as they do by others, what thousands who are now flashing in coats of many-colours would suddenly appear before us clad in deep mourning! How would the delicacy of peach-blossom and the flush of crimson subside into dreary sable, satins and velvet change to sad crape, and the harlequinade of life become as a funeral procession. A nigrification almost universal would ensue, like swarms of fire-flies darkening into black-beetles.

Admit but the principle of adopting the same ceremonies in our own case which we observe towards our next of kin, and where is the conscientious man who might not be called upon to put on black as a slight tribute of respect to his departed self! Yea, hundreds who now dazzle the eye of the wondering multitude by the gaudiness of their equipages, would be compelled to change their green and crimson liveries for a crow-colour; and we should see the footman, shorn of his finery, swinging behind the carriage, in deep mourning for his deceased master grinning inside.

Not a day passes (who will deny this?) that any man of common experience may not converse with a dozen defunct people. In a great city like London it is impossible to stir out on a fine day when the town is full, without seeing numbers of departed persons of one's acquaintance sauntering up and down in the sunshine; without stopping here and there at the corners of streets

to chat with the lamented dead, or nodding carelessly to them on the other side of the way. The people who have gone to their long homes years ago, are very much abroad in this gay metropolis. We dined the other day in a party of fourteen merry-makers, well acquainted with each other; but to our certain knowledge nine of them were no more, and had been so for various periods of time, dating from the different circumstances of their career.

It is very easy to object that all these deceased persons appear to be as much as ever in existence; and, indeed, furnish evidence of their being actually alive by dining, walking, laughing, cheating, and the like. In all these respects, and forty others, they are living to the full as much as though they had never departed this life at all. Nevertheless they are all dead, and will so continue, until vitality is discovered in door-nails.

The phrase which has long been current wherever the English language is spoken, "dead and buried," was not circulated without a necessity for it. "Poor Bob is dead and buried," is an assertion wonderfully differing from "Poor Bob is dead." There is a warranty conveyed in the additional words which is much wanting in numbers of instances, and without it the fact may be moonshine. The burial is a clencher. The popular existence of the phrase is a proof that the demise is not usually held to be a settled thing until it is associated with interment.

This very day were we discussing the three per cents with a city man, when, on a sudden, memory turned back into old days, to trace the form and lineaments of an early chum. He was once the merriest little winged bird-like soul that ever sang songs half way between earth and heaven. Such assuredly was Little Piper. It was necessary to get up into the sky before you could

catch him, but when caught he was your own. So was all he had. He never knew the meaning of the word grasping, except when he had hold of a friend's hand or jumped into a river (as he once did) to drag out a drowning lad, three times his own weight and size.

When he became a man he was the boy as before. He called nothing his own but his faults, and never forgot anybody but himself, a person whom Little Piper rarely bestowed a thought upon. As he had emptied his pockets at school in making presents, and giving sixpences (in spite of lectures against such immoral practices) to begging mothers with hungry children crying and clinging about them; so now on a larger scale he pursued the same plan, and was seldom without a happy face, save when he witnessed misery he could not relieve. Lucky was it for him that he could not give away the eyes out of his head; for as loan or gift they would certainly have gone to some blind wanderer, and he would have contented himself with a pair of spectacles.

And was it Little Piper with whom we this morning discoursed concerning the three per cents? Let no discreet heart think it. This was Thomas Piper, Esq., of Upper-breeches-pocket-buildings, City. The Piper beloved of us, remembered, venerated, mourned, though not per coat and hat-band, died in 1830 on the Stock-exchange. He went there innocently enough one morning, and was never seen alive afterwards. And here is another Piper calling himself the same!

As well pretend that the rising rocket and the descending stick are the same; or that the Dick Withers of last year is the Dick Withers of this year.

Last year's Dick was the most social, generous, and enjoying of bachelors; surrounded by troops of gay friends, and as delighted to give them welcome as they

were to seek it. He looked Care in the face and laughed. When a pack of scowling, prowling, rascally thoughts wandered into his mind and would have settled there, he packed them all off, like an ill-conditioned troop of gipsy plunderers, from his pleasant fields and hedges. Nothing that was not honest and good-tempered had its abode with him. He was the first to enter into a frolic, and the last to get tired of it. He found out the right end of life; he lived and was jolly. A joke in those days never came amiss to him; but a few months ago he tried his hand at a practical one, and married. Alas! he died on his wedding day.

There is, however, a Dick Withers lurking somewhere or other in the holes and corners of domesticity, with a soul too narrow to be tenanted by more than a single sentiment; with a sterile heart that has but food for one passion at a time. He could only persuade himself that he was in love, by utterly abjuring friendship. He at once substituted uxoriousness for universal philanthropy, and cared in fact for the one human being merely because she had become part of himself.

All his friends he dropped quietly; as well the sharers of his secret thoughts, as the partners in his social enjoyments. All his doors he securely bolted; and Hospitality peeped through the keyhole to see who was coming, and to cry "not at home" to the visitor. No spree, no cigar, no whist; he forgot or abandoned all his old ideas of dances, concerts, and theatres; he changed his side in politics, or had no politics at all; and turning Love's temple into a mausoleum, deliberately buried himself alive.

Sheer insanity might attempt to discover some lurking resemblance between the two Dicks, and believe them to be one; but reason rejects the proposition with scorn. True, the first Dick Withers did take a wife

(he was always so full of his fun); he just lived to wear his wedding-suit; but his name should have appeared on the same day, and in the same paper, among the Deaths and the Marriages.

That all the signs and evidences of life capable of meeting together in one human specimen of vitality, afford no proof that death has not been there before them, is perfectly well known to every one who happens to be acquainted with our friend Rattleby. That his eyes are the fiercest in their frolicsome and extravagant glee of any in company, and his laugh always the loudest, however noisy and numerous the party, is an everywhere admitted fact; but is all that wonderful and overwhelming display of life any evidence that Rattleby is still living? Are those boisterous spirits, that constant and rapid flow of humour, by which he makes all around him "certain they shall die of laughter," ten times in the hour, a testimony that Rattleby himself is not yet dead? Is the elasticity of the lungs an argument against the dead-weight of the heart, and are spasms health? If the real Rattleby be not deceased, death is a poetic fable. He still may go on to shout, caper, and toss off bumpers; but live as fast as he may, he can never be alive again. As Dick Withers must be said to have finally quitted this life when he entered the state of matrimony, so may another man be as fatally cut off by being left out of a wedding. This was the lot of the royster now in view. Poor Rattleby, who appears to have such quantities of existence to spare, died, beyond mistake, poor fellow! on the day Kate Fisher was married.

His fate, varied by circumstances, is the fate of thousands surrounding him. When we say that they are not themselves, their story is but half told; they are not so much as the semblance of themselves. It is

impossible to regard them even as their own ghosts; so opposite in character, habit, and disposition, was the original now in the tomb, to the living substance bearing the name of the deceased.

Hear this lecturer upon humanity, whose charity and tenderness of heart is an affair of precept only, a subject to descant upon for personal objects. He died soon after he had taken his seat in Parliament, where he is still to be seen "as large as life."

Look at this hoary gambler; you cannot call his spasmodic mode of living an existence; the truth is, that he was brought down from an honourable station years ago, by the misconduct of a beloved son, and perished in his prime.

Here is a mother, childless now, but not seeming in outward show otherwise than living. She makes rational replies whenever she is addressed, smiles calmly when kindness shown to her appears to ask a smile, and bends her brow over a book of which she is not reading a single word. Hers is not a life. She died when the last of her children, a fair daughter in her sweet and early youth, was laid within the family grave.

Go to the next public assembly, no matter for what object it may be called together; or, what will serve the purpose as well, look from your window upon the passers-by. The unfortunate deceased are as two to one, and if they were to take it into their heads (skulls rather) to revolt, might at one fell swoop drive the living minority into their graves.

Here comes an author, with an intense consciousness of his own existence, assured, with an emphasis beyond the force of myriads of affidavits, not only that he is living now, but that posterity, until time itself shall be no more, will be a witness of his glorious longevity. The delusion, if ludicrous, is sad too; the immortal has

been dead ever since the night on which his tragedy was damned.

Yet the *prima donna* who sweeps past him, shooting onward like a star, and seeming to breathe empyreal air, is surely living in every atom of the bright dust whereof she is formed. So indeed it would appear, for to the eye she is life all over, the personification of whatever can be comprehended in the idea of existence. But what a bad judge of visible facts the eye is, and how necessary is it sometimes to see with the heart. Viewed through that medium, sympathy proclaims her to have been some time deceased. When her darling sister, cleverer, younger, and handsomer than herself came out with such brilliant success at the other house, the vital spark fled. All talk of life after that had about as much meaning in it as the song she excels in. She still gives, it must be admitted, the most startling tokens of an active and indestructible animation; but these are only the mock-heroic contortions of the eel, after it has been neatly skinned, and cut carefully into inches.

There is another popular phrase which clearly implies that death is not at all incompatible with a protracted stay within the precincts of existence. Poor So-and-so, say the commentators on mortality, "is dead *and gone*," intimating that to die is not necessarily to go, and that the defunct are not always the departed; "dead and gone" describes the double event, whenever that takes place; the exception and not the rule. The currency of the phrase strengthens our argument that dying and going are not synonymous terms, and that we may long continue to have crowds of the deceased for our intimate acquaintances.

It is interesting to remark how varied are the periods of demise among the classes referred to, and how oppo-

site are the causes which have rendered the obituary of the living so extensive. One who professes to be sixty-five, and vows that he has lived all those years, died at the age of forty, in consequence of his success in a duel with a near relative. Another, who conceives himself to have attained to middle age, was, in reality, cut off in the very flower of his youth, by a shilling delicately introduced in his father's will. A third, a maiden, antiquated and thinner than all her tribe, by virtue of taking nothing but tea and cribbage, breathed her last (in spite of her hushed sigh, or her small sarcasm, that may seem to say she still survives), a long time ago, on the day when the gallant adventurer, who had twice danced with her after she was six-and-twenty, sailed for India without making the fondly expected offer.

For a pair of positive existences, as far as first appearances go, we need look no further than to this old sweeper at the crossing, and the occupant of the carriage rolling over it. Whosoever should conceive them to be actually living would decide wholly in the dark, and pronounce upon a case without a fact to judge it by. Sudden death overtook the unhappy cross-sweeper at the age of thirty, when he lost every sixpence of his large fortune; and the loller in the carriage expired in as sudden a manner at a later age, when he came quite unexpectedly into a fine estate. One lost a tin-mine, and the other found a canal; both perished prematurely.

Prosperity and adversity, satiated appetite, defeated ambition, brilliant success, wounded honour, blighted affection, filial ingratitude; the hundred incidents, dark or bright, which make up in their confused and yet consistent combination, the history of every human life; each of these, occurring at a critical moment, may bring the real *finis* long before the story appears to have arrived at its conclusion. The cold, formal, appointed

ending, is simply an affair for the apothecary and the gravedigger.

The sentiment which first suggested the wearing of mourning was beautiful and holy; but custom strips it of this sanctity; its poetry has become a commonplace; and in the adoption of the ceremony the heart silently heaving with sorrow and honour for the dead, has no concern. Still, if the fashion is to be continued, it may at least be turned to a higher use, and be made to serve sincerer ends. The suit of mourning is in few cases put on *soon enough!* If we would invest the custom with grace and dignity, elevating it with moral sentiment, we should sometimes wear the black dress while the mourned is yet amongst us. Letters to old friends must then be written, often perhaps on black-bordered paper, indicating our regret for their loss; and the crape upon the hat we touch to a former companion, as we pass him by, might be worn, poor moral skeleton! for himself.

It is painful, after an absence of a few years, to return to a family circle in which we had stored up a thousand friendly and affectionate memories; where we expected to find the bright deep well-spring of sympathy, bright, deep, and clear as of old, and see nothing there but dry sand; Time's glass pouring out its contents over and over again, only to increase the heap and make a desert of the garden, every hour adding a little handful to the disappointing, the desolate, the hideous waste.

What a mockery of the heart, as we stand in the midst and look mournfully around, to attempt to persuade ourselves that we are amongst the living; merely because they all regularly breathe and wear no shroud! Count the faces there; in number, but in number only, they are the same; look into them for the old recognition, and the death's head is grinning. We feel that

we have just shaken hands with the late Mr. Jones, who has forgotten to get himself buried. The act of friendship, in this case the ceremonial, has sent a chill to the soul. The momentary contact with that cold nature was freezing; at the bare touch of his hand, we feel horrid rheumatism running up the right arm.

It is the same as we proceed round the circle. The friends and companions of our youth are no more. The eldest son perished of a scarlet coat on obtaining a cornetcy, and the eldest daughter died a sadder death when she joined the saints. The remainder became defunct in succession, each in his own favourite way. When we take our leave, it is bidding adieu to the dead. The ordinary courtesies there would be anomalous and absurd to the last degree; for they must come in the form of inquiries concerning the departed, "How is your late lamented father?" or, "I hope your deceased sisters will go to the opera on Tuesday."

EVERY-DAY LYING.

Believe none of us!—*Hamlet.*

As speech was given unto the wise man that he might conceal his thoughts, so (*vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*) thought must have been given unto the same personage that he might conceal his speech. This apparent contradiction was necessary to the interests of truth. Many lies are thought which are never spoken, but there are as many spoken which are never thought.

If every deviation from truth's straight line constitute a falsehood, then the human tongue teems with lies; we breathe them in myriads. Not a creature has opened

its mouth this day without telling ten thousand. Plain speaking in that case is false speaking, and silence is the sole remedy for the evil. Lying is our language.

The best or the worst of it is, that the moralists who have written upon lying are so imbued, to the heart's core, with the universal vice that they are not to be believed on their oaths. Essays upon lying are only additions to the stock; and nobody who casts an eye upon this page is so absurdly credulous as to suppose that one grain of truth lurks in a single syllable that blots it. We write lies, speak lies, think lies, and dream lies while we are lying in bed.

Those who admit a multiplicity, only recognise two classes of lies, black and white. But there is the gray lie, which goes *into* black and white, and lives to be venerable; there is the green lie, which, from its simplicity, is easily detected; there is the red lie, which is glaring; and the blue, which is a favourite with the literary. These, however, are well known, though not classed. They are more or less premeditated, all of them. Some have their origin in utter malignity, some in mere selfishness, or wicked sport.

But the lies uttered in courtesy and goodnature exceed them in number as a thousand to one! They are spoken in perfect innocence, and never had in a single instance the slightest chance of harming any human being. The true white lie, which is selfish and defensive ("not at home," and "I promise to pay," may be received as illustrations), frequently takes people in; but the undeceptive conventional lie, uttered in pure tenderness for others, is as superior to the selfish white, as the white is to the scandalous black.

There is something consoling in the reflection, that great as is the vice of lying, nine-tenths of it as now in practice spring from the virtues! The vilest miscreant,

for one lie uttered in malice, tells a hundred in pure courtesy, in compliance with refined usages, or charity towards the feelings of another. Why do people request "the honour," and "feel very happy," a dozen times a day? Why are they so "excessively glad" to hear something, or so "extremely sorry" on the other hand! They experience neither pleasure nor regret, we know, as the words expressive of these sensations pass their lips. They are notoriously telling lies when they profess to be truly concerned, or positively delighted. But they are lying upon a philanthropic, a sympathetic principle. They intend no deception; no self-interest prompts them; they are vicious out of kindness and delicacy. Can the spirit of self-sacrifice be carried further, than in thus surrendering truth for the sake of pleasing an every-day acquaintance who agrees to dispense with sincerity!

When it is urged, as it constantly is, that these courtesies, because hollow, are worthless; that the expression of "deep regret" or "extreme pleasure" is but a mockery without the feeling; the answer is, that the philanthropy is deep in proportion to the insincerity. Where there is no real love the words of affection are indeed an amiable and gratuitous kindness. No thanks to friendship for being friendly; but is it nothing that a mere acquaintance should be ready at any time to tell a lie upon our account?

Not a word could be advanced in behalf of this order of lies, if they were ever likely to be believed. But against this calamity people guard themselves in the most scrupulous manner by tones and looks quite at variance with the words. Nay, to convince their hearers that they are merely lying, they declare that "they shall be only *too* happy," and at the same time that "they are quite *too* distressed." They vow with a

brazen countenance that they are "absolutely ashamed," and protest with great energy that they "thought they should have died" on some occasion when death was the last thing they were thinking of.

How much greater still is the kindness when the offer of sympathy is made to extend through us to remote antiquity! A great talker, proud of his family, was describing the other night the exploits of his famous progenitors, until he came to one who in Henry the Seventh's time had the misfortune to break his leg; an accident which drew from a lady-listener the tender remark, that "she was extremely sorry to hear it."

In fact, anything or anybody will serve for a peg on which to hang a profession of sympathy, so necessary is the show of it felt to be, where the substance is not. It was not long after the death of Weber, that a little group of admirers of that amiable man of genius, were deploring his early and sudden loss, in a foreign land and in the hour of his triumph; and the name of Weber, Weber, was repeated sorrowfully by several voices; until the lady, whose guests we were, drew near, and observing the melancholy tone of the conversation, caught as she *supposed* the name which was the subject of our sad discourse. Then, deeming that a polite regard for our feelings required her to fill up the pause which ensued, she sighed mournfully, and in a plaintive voice, uttered the following words:

"Poor Cibber! poor Colley Cibber! Well, I'm sorry he's dead!"

To be sorry for Cibber! Who could possibly have expected to live long enough in this world, to hear any mourner it contains obligingly lamenting with sighs the loss of Colley Cibber!

Cobbet, remarking upon the "regret" with which the press very naturally announces the demise of eminent

persons, declared his conviction, that if the devil were to die, some newspapers would notice the event "with deep regret." Still we could never have anticipated a sigh for the untimely fate of Cibber!

There is no lie that people will not tell to express a becoming sympathy on their own parts, and to excite it in others. When a young person is drowned in the river, or crushed on the railway, how does it *always* happen that he was "going to be married on the following Sunday," or that he was "only married the Sunday previous." Few persons have the slightest interest in the relation of such fables; but all have the deepest interest in the progress of sympathy, and the sadder they make the story, the more surely they elicit the symptoms.

The most moral persons in society will lie egregiously from a mere habit of civility, to agree with you when agreement is not wanting. Some lie without any motive; their untruths are mere matters of course. What could have been the direct prompter in the case of that serious and solemn dame, who only yesterday, seeing somebody reading (the book was Shakspeare, opened at a large engraving of Caliban, of which the dame had a glimpse), inquired what that was? The reader, supposing she meant the volume, said "Shakpeare." "Oh!" ejaculated the serious dame, and then added, "Ah! *I thought it looked like him?*"

All that is not religion in that old dame is morality; in her composition nothing else mingles; yet it is certain she never thought so. Had she been told "it's the Thames-tunnel," her remark would equally have been, "I thought it looked like it." At the same time, perhaps, no influence on earth could prevail upon her to utter a deliberate untruth.

We may easily perceive how very trifling and insig-

nificant in number are the lies annually told for purposes of wilful deception; in trade, in politics, and in social intercourse, with the view of filling pockets or gratifying base passions, in self-defence and in defaming enemies, from vanity, from knavery, from malice; when we contrast their amount with the enormous multitude daily uttered in courtesy and in sympathy; and then again proceed to estimate the myriads which have their birth in good fellowship, in gaiety of heart, and a desire to keep the world alive and merry.

Of this latter class, one all-sufficing example offers itself in the practice of Dick Whisk. Dick, indeed, was a class in himself. He differed from other liars, not so much in the length of his bow, as in never departing from the principle with which he set out, that of drawing it incessantly. He must have abandoned all idea of the truth before he quitted the cradle. When he began to lisp he began to lie. His motto might have been borrowed from Mr. Fag—"Oh! I lied sir, I lied; I forget the particular lie, but they got no truth from me."

The water of Truth's well produced in his moral frame a terrible shudder; his was a sort of hydrophobia. He had an unconquerable repugnance to facts, yet he might have related them with perfect safety, relying upon his astonishing power of translation. There was no mistaking a statement falling from his lips for anything but a lie. Nobody was ever known to insult him with the supposition that he was telling the truth; and, talking continually, he passed through life unsullied by the breath of suspicion. It was his proud boast that no man ever believed a word he said, that he had not an enemy in the world. The character he had earned in early youth he never forfeited in maturer years; for he found when he first went to school, that the verb "to *lie*" constitutes exactly three-fourths of the verb "to

live." To lie and die were almost all he had to do. A *hic non jacet* is upon his tomb. The inscription required the addition of a *non* to mark the change that had fallen upon him, and distinguish death from life.

Dick's lies were the perfection of lies. They were not tremendous thumpers, save when the occasion called for something in the enormous style, when he would fling you out a fine spanker off-hand, big enough to frighten Munchausen into a fit of truth, and make Pinto stare in his coffin.

But generally he kept to the Every-day style; it was good *level lying,* save, as we have said, when a regular crammer was wanted. This was when he was provoked to a flight by some aggravated truth that could not otherwise be topped. And this brings us to an anecdote.

It was summer weather, and a swimming-feat was boasted of by a companion. Unluckily there was a witness present, who vouched for the authenticity of the story. Dick hated the maxim of *magna est veritas,* and never would allow an authentic anecdote to prevail. He was born prior to the date of the new school, and knew fiction to be stronger than truth. When a lover of accuracy plunged into the Serpentine, he took an imaginative leap into the German Ocean, if duly provoked, as he happened to be on this occasion. So he began.

"Very good, at least not so bad." (Dick begrudged the least scrap of praise to an authenticated fact.) "Not so very bad it must be admitted. You remind me of an odd incident that dates as far back as the time when, according to the old almanack, 'George III. was king.' I was living by the sea-coast then, and went down to the beach to bathe. Not a soul was in sight; nothing visible but land, water, and sky. I was accustomed to

go about half a mile out, but the sea was delicious, I was in good spirits, and on I went, buoyant as an ocean bird. Now and then I checked my course to sport about a bit, and dally with the wanton waves until I could almost fancy myself a sort of thinking fish. Then I struck out again, heedless of the distance from the beach, until it occurred to me it might be time to turn back. Just then, as I was about to set my face towards the shore, what do you think happened?

"The blue sky looked suddenly gray, the sparkles upon the water were extinguished, and I heard a *noise* behind me. It startled me, and instead of turning to the beach, I struck out. With every movement of my limbs I breasted the billows, and went rapidly forward; but still I heard the same noise following me. Again I struck out, and another mile was accomplished without producing a symptom of fatigue; but the noise was still audible, and the object that occasioned it could not be very distant. I thought it rather strange, but struck out once more; and now the noise seemed nearer. It was a puffing, splashing sound, evidently produced by the effort of something pursuing me. A grampus or two fighting could never make that queer noise.

"A feeling of wonder now seized me, soon succeeded by a feeling of alarm. Bolder swimming still was necessary, and exerting all my strength, I dashed through another mile or so of water at a few strokes, for I was really terrified. Still onward and onward, close to me, rushed the splashing Mystery, it seemed almost at my heels. I heard it breathing deeply, then blowing like the four winds at once, then dashing aside the waters, with the ease and rapidity of a tiger breaking through the jungle. It could be nothing less than a shark. I almost felt him nibbling at my lower

extremities, and joyfully would I have given one leg to save my life. Swimming could alone save that, and once more I struck out with superhuman energy.

"By this time I was some miles from the beach. I seemed carried away into the great deep, and the green waves looked considerably bluer. I was 'alone on the wide, wide sea;' no, not alone, for my dread pursuer, whatever it might be, was by this time a still closer companion, puffing, tumbling, and splashing continually, as though there were an insurrection among the porpoises. You think it was a steamer, but it wasn't. Steamers were rather scarce in those days, and I had hardly heard of them. I once or twice fancied it might be a seventy-four giving me chase, or old Neptune out upon a lark.

"No, it was something living; not one shark certainly, nor a half-dozen. It seemed at last nothing short of a young whale. Snorting and blowing and splashing up the foaming water incessantly, it advanced in my wake. It was as close to me, as an unpleasant postscript is to a letter.

"All was over with me; the fear, as I struck out my extremities behind, that I should never be able to draw them back again, deprived me of the due command of my limbs, and I could swim no further. I resolved to be seized head foremost. Accordingly, with one desperate plunge downwards, one toppling movement in the water, I turned and faced the Sea-Mystery, prepared to meet any monster of the deep that a horrible destiny might set against me. And now, right before me, as close as I am to you at this moment, I beheld, what do you think?"

[And here Dick paused, for up to this moment he had not the slightest idea of the form in which his climax was to come, never premeditating a catastrophe.]

"*It was—Lord—Byron!* as I'm a wicked sinner!"

* * * *

Poor Dick Whisk! This was one of his holiday lies. His Every-day Lying would fill libraries. His peculiar glory consisted in the wish never to be believed. The man who "lies like truth," forgets that he must necessarily tell truth like lies; now, Dick's fictions were not so dangerous, but to himself they had the same result. Had he solemnly asserted that Cæsar invaded Britain, or that Wellington won at Waterloo, nobody would have believed him.

THE MAN OF HIGH NOTIONS.

If there be any vitality in the Wit's nice man, who is a person with nasty ideas, we have a companion for him in the Man of High Notions, who is a person of low performance. He spends the first half of his life in trying to act up to these high notions, and the other half in rearing them higher and higher still, so as to ensure to himself an excellent excuse for never more attempting in deeds to attain so sublime and increasing an altitude.

We have known several men of very high notions; known them at various stages of existence, and in several orders of society; but they were alike at all hours and in all places. The man is a wonderfully variegated and versatile animal, individually; but there is always a strong settled family likeness running throughout the tribe, and each has his relative peculiarity; although what is high to one might not seem so high to another.

His character breaks out in everything he says and

does. If a work of benevolence be on foot, and a guinea a-piece be put down, the Man of High Notions may be known by an admirable promptitude in buttoning his pockets, and muttering something about sending a cheque on Coutts for fifty. You cannot get him to promise less. He insists on giving that, if anything.

It is very true (there are drawbacks to every excellence) that this lofty aim not only overshoots the mark sometimes, but wholly deters people of lower views from making any attempt to hit it. Thus the too much comes to nothing. There was an example of this disastrous tendency, of the high notion to knock little people down, last week, in our neighbourhood. A small matter, so often a momentous one, of mere shelter and sustenance, was required to be suddenly accomplished for a helpless widow and her pining child, whose story was a piteous one. There is a Man of High Notions in the district, and the tale moved him. The affair presented no difficulty: the good work was well nigh done, indeed, but he *would* take it up. He had some notions of his own, he said. He saw the project from a high point of view. He was for effecting something at once upon a grand scale. He drew the whole business into his hands, called people together (whose speeches seemed long to the famishing widow), nominated a committee, whose comfortable sittings might appear protracted to wanderers without a roof over their heads; and, after great delay, proposed the erection of a row of almshouses.

Every hint about the shelter of a single room and the scarcity of daily bread was indignantly, scornfully rejected: it was pitiful, disgraceful. A handsome row of almshouses! he was for that! with flower-beds and a grotto behind, and a fountain in front. A Samaritan whom he knew, bred an architect, had given him a

ground plan for nothing. He confessed that he had high notions on the subject, and would withdraw at once from the negotiation, unless all agreed to erect a row of almshouses in a salubrious situation for the sad widow and her fatherless infant. A little cottage would be shabby.

Unluckily, as such edifices do not spring of themselves from the ground, the whole project fell to it: and the hungry and houseless, laid low, had to thank the high notions of benevolence for the continuance of their desolate doom.

The Man of High Notions never heard of such a thing as a joint and pudding. He would scorn to dine a root-munching hermit on fare less rich than turtle and vension; and the result is, that he never asks you at all: or, if by chance you should succeed in eating a dinner of his in the Spring, it is only a prelude to his friendly application in July for thirty pounds to hand to his wine-merchant. He has high notions, you know, and can't bear to let the man wait; besides, he wants more claret.

At times, however, it suits the Man of High Notions to let them exhibit themselves through the medium of high bills. If you should be undeserving of the good opinion expressed in his flattering application, and mean-spirited enough to disappoint it, he has been known to send a further order to the wine-merchant without payment, and to put him off for six months, rather than subject you prematurely to the slightest inconvenience. But by the end of that further probationary period, he has commonly found the fellow to be a mere mercenary tradesman, who wants his money; a creature who has few other objects in carrying on business than that of making what he can; who never seeks for custom but with a view to cash, and actually

lures his fellow-beings to aid him in getting it in; a wretch with very low notions, in short, who wants to be paid. He is obliged to cut him; he must; and perhaps declines his visits by a quiet inoffensive removal to another part of the town. He is compelled at the beginning of the next year to get his hock and madeira from some other person, whose cellars are not so well stocked perhaps. Nevertheless, he submits to this cruel injury rather than permit himself to be perseveringly dunned. He has such very high notions on that point.

In the Summer, when the meek and lowly wife of the Man of High Notions suggests an inexpensive trip to Herne Bay (an humble excursion, but surely not discreditable), he looks upon her with the horror due to incipient assassination, murder in its early tender stage, putting razors and arsenic out only as feelers. The cold-blooded attempt to undermine his moral dignity; to betray him, through the delicate susceptibility of his affections, into irredeemable vulgarity, and a five-shilling steamer; shocks his high notions, and so overcomes him that he is compelled to repair for the Summer to Constantinople, leaving his English incumbrances behind. His ideas upon these subjects are too elevated to admit of a compromise, and are not to be coarsely brought down to the level of family inconvenience.

But his notions, if high, are reasonable. He will not vehemently insist on going to Constantinople, hook or crook, win or lose; it may be that he prefers a jolly lark in Paris, or a run Rhine-wards, in which case he is back before Winter. All which pleasures would have been shabbily sacrificed on the altar of his low-minded wife's abominable Herne-Bayism! However, that mean-spirited little divinity atones for her offence next year, by the constancy of her visits to him in the doleful

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lock-up house, and by her life-wasting exertions for his relief; for he has some high notions on the score of being left alone, abandoned and forgotten, in a prison. He does not like it; he never did, that's more; and he can tell you what his ideas are upon the matter.

It is about this time, most probably, that, by various pretexts, all exhibiting the exalted character of his notions, he sucks you, as it were, into his presence, for the purpose of proposing, in the most agreeable and good-humoured way imaginable, that you should just give him, the afternoon will do, a handful of sovereigns, and he will get his friend, Captain Snubbs, to give you a handful in return when he comes up from Chatham.

As you may not immediately enter into this equitable arrangement, the Man of High Notions only troubles you to advance him five for the pressing purposes of the moment: and it is not until he hears that you can't, that he discovers that two would do! oh, capitally! But as he still hears that you really cannot on the instant supply that small desideratum, the most elevated notion he possesses finds instant expression in the happy question, "When can you?" He never likes to be completely baffled, and driven quite into a corner. He has uncommon high notions that way, which enable him to look down, like one inly amused and diverted at your futile attempts under his very eyes to keep your pocket buttoned. He smiles at your awkward efforts, but he thinks you have some very low ideas about small sums of money.

The same reference to an innate loftiness of idea in himself always accompanies, and often sustains him through life. As he drops down the stream, and the tide runs very low; as he drinks his way from the creamy sparkles of society to its dregs, from the Clarendon to the gin-palace; then from the neat swept

sanded parlour to the reeking, stifling tap; from the shelter of the inside to the bench in the sun out of doors;—he has still a reserved point, and cherishes some ideas, which he is perfectly convinced are of an elevating character, and give him dignity in your eyes. These are the ideas that save him from being disconcerted in any emergency, or under any humiliation.

When his former crony, the Viscount, detected him at the door of the "Jolly Sandboy," with his face buried in the foam of a pot of porter, he only, stopping half-way in his draught, turned his frothy visage to that of his fastidious friend, on which incredulity and amazement were whimsically painted, saying:

"Why, my dear fellow, you stare; but let me tell you, it's the only way to drink it. Always take it as it comes, with the head on. It's a mistake to go blowing that little tunnel in the froth at the side. Low people, who don't understand half-and-half, do that; but it's ignorance. I entertain a few immensely high notions on this point, and always did."

If the Man with High Notions writes a book, he uses very grand words, so that at the beginning you wonder how many syllables the end will run to. He chooses the longest in the language, you may be sure. He pities you if you suppose that he picks out the finest words he can discover as substitutes for his ideas; they are chosen as being suitable to lofty notions.

The man of such notions instinctively rejects plain phrases; nothing he so dislikes as short, close, simple words. When he is unintelligible, he deems himself enviably successful. He flatters himself that he has a few; yes, a few ideas, he must say; which, thank Heaven, it is not for every low reader to understand. He is of opinion that readers in general ought to have higher notions than they betray, considering what writers like

himself have done for them. Yet he cherishes a philosophic distrust of the efficacy of education in counteracting moral evil; and thinks that, for the sake of saving appearances, the poor might have sham books manufactured for them; as Shenstone, when a little boy, had a piece of wood given to him, instead of the gilt-edged Bible, to take to bed with him. But he has not fully developed, in relation to this principle, all the elevated ideas that stretch themselves in philanthropic laziness within his brain.

Rosalind, prettily says, that her lover is as high as her heart; whatever is favoured by the Man of Lofty Notions, must come up to the height of his mind. He has an insuperable aversion to everything on a small scale. He would eat no beef on Christmas-day, because the piece roasted only weighed sixteen pounds; and in the evening he took to wondering why chestnuts, put between the bars, should be a bit less than cocoa-nuts, which he conceived to be decidedly of a more eligible size. He had some notions, he said, which were anything but small, touching a feature or two of natural history.

The soul of a man, thus animated, is, of course, too large and lofty for the limits of one kingdom. It would be more exact to say, one world. The Man of High Notions is a great politician; but his politics rather appertain to the affairs of the universe, than the affairs of the mere earth. He could speak, sometimes, as easily of globes, and worlds, and systems, as we, ordinary commentators, speak of Texas, Tahiti, or Tangier. A mere nation suggested to his high apprehension of things the same idea that a mere parish raises in the common mind. And as for things actually parochial, they were always a long way too insignificant for his care or interference.

It is doubtful whether a man with really high notions would not let his dwelling be totally destroyed by fire, rather than have it said that the conflagration was extinguished by a parish-engine. How could a blaze, at Northumberland House, be put out by the engine of St. Martin's.

The man, then, whom we are sketching, so far as he is a politician, takes little account of what happens at his own door. The parish poor have their appointed guardians, and there are police-constables (or should be) always on the watch for beggars, so that they cannot be on the look-out for thieves also. But he has a keen eye for Russia, his long ear stretches over the Atlantic, and for five-and-twenty years of the present century, he dreamt nightly of Metternich. He has high notions that stretch upward, even to the great Mogul, and overlook, by miles, "their high Mightinesses, the Dutch."

Yet, what incongruities meet, even in the formation of perfect consistency. This same man, of elongated ideas, is sometimes so diminutive that he can peep through a keyhole, or pry into a letter, not six inches long; so essentially small in his conformation, that he can insinuate himself into a friend's confidence through the tiny hole wormed by a corkscrew. Nay, he has sometimes such an absorbing sense of the little, to the exclusion of the lofty, that the pranks of a comet would have less enchantment for him than the interests involved in an overcharge of twopence in his laundress's nine-months' account.

The Man of High Notions is frequently famous at battling for the odd halfpence, and pushing into the theatre, forgetting to give the penny for the bill, thrust into his hand as he goes. He has some grand ideas about turnpikes, and likes to drive spiritedly through, uttering an unintelligible exclamation, which he calls

carrying matters with a high hand. He has large notions about small change. In short, he daily performs some of the shabbiest and most roguish things in the world; as a master-stroke of grand policy, and to set off his lofty actions; his little deeds are supposed to be the proofs and exhibitors of his great thoughts. He cheats, only to be nobly honest. He swindles people of thousands of sixpences, that he may pay one-pound-ten, if he pleases.

When he happens to have money out, he has also very high ideas of interest. His notions, on these occasions, are often truly towering. But when, on the contrary, it is his hard destiny to pay back money he has borrowed, his high notions convince him that one per cent. is extortionate, and one-and-a-half is plunder and infamy. He takes discount from his shoe-black, if he ever pays him; entertaining very high notions about all low functionaries, and who can go lower than the foot?

It is naturally to be supposed that the same philosopher, however born, has his own ideas about high birth. He, himself, may have come to light in a garret, a nativity we must all acknowledge, anything but low; and accounting, perhaps, for his profound veneration for everything high-born. The first inquiry he makes, whenever he sees a man obtaining distinction, is, "Who was his grandfather?" If it should appear that the distinguished man never had one, he denies his merit, suspects him to be a scamp, and sneers at him as a nobody. He can never admit genius into the account, if there be no grandfather. What is all glory, he cries, if such an essential as a grandfather be wanting! *A priori*, the grandfather must be identified, or greatness there is none to be recognised.

It seldom occurs to a person of high notions to ask

what the man has done, is doing, or is likely to do, but where did his ancestors reside in 1503? He has no such maxim as, "Tell me who are his companions, and I'll tell you who he is:" his rule rather runs, "Tell me all about his progenitors, and I'll tell you whether he is anybody." He thinks it highly probable that the "individual in question," as he loves to call him, may be of respectable character, and of a promising talent, but he only wants to look at his pedigree. He has peculiar ideas in that respect, and carries his researches back a little farther than the Revolution. He has a snug notion of his own, that the idiotic and slavish descendant of Charlemagne, is a rather greater person than all the men put together, who have worked out their own greatness.

The Man of High Notions sighs, and blushes vinegar-colour, when he reflects that so many immortal ornaments and defenders of the country, raised on pinnacles of glory, only lower than the stars, have had such abominably low beginnings; no grandfathers. It gives a shock to all his lofty ideas at once.

In the presence of the aristocracy, his notions become exalted in virtue of their very humility. His preferences are ever for the most highly-born. About that, he apprehends, there never can be a mistake. A Marquis is a greater man than a Baron, any day. So also is it, as a matter of course, with the dates of ancestry. The man of such notions as these, will always, of two barons, the fourteenth of one title, and the first of another, bestow the palm, and heap the homage, on the former. Thirteen Barons, he exclaims triumphantly, have preceded him in his family honours; he must be more noble, and more illustrious, far, than the man whose father was an attorney or a banker, and whose progeni-

tors had neither house nor home when George the Second was alive.

And yet, how palpable is the error, here committed by the man of such very high notions. How manifestly he overlooks the fact, that the *first* Baron, who stands in contrast with the fourteenth, is the more illustrious; for the simple reason that he is the actual winner, and not the inheritor of the honour. The glory is with the modern whose own deeds have raised him, and not with the mere successor of those who have remained stationary so long. But the Man of High Notions is sure to snarl at new families, and to be facetious about mushroom peers.

He makes amends, however, by his ready adulation when wanted, even in these quarters. With a lofty view he has a lowly neck, and he is delighted day and night to feel any aristocratic foot set upon it. N.B. No objection to an iron heel; if a gouty toe, the better.

The very clothes of the great, the very cut of them, are objects of a darling interest to the worshipper. He has high notions about an Earl's waistcoat, and thinks there never were such pantaloons in this world as the Duke of Fitzlongshanks had on. Nor can he help telling you how the other Duke carried one glove in his hand, and how the young Lord Rainbow wore crape upon his hat, probably because his father was just dead. He has furthermore some choice ideas on filial piety, with which he will be apt to favour you if you are not on your guard, ending with his opinion that it must be extremely irksome for a lord to take the trouble to go into mourning every time anybody dies.

Of all possible abominations of a public nature, a plebeian Minister of State shocks most a man of his turn. He thinks that the Whigs, in his younger days,

were perfectly right in not giving Burke a seat in the cabinet. Those men had proper notions. But he never in his life experienced such a blow, as when Canning became Premier. That was an elevation that overturned every principle on which dignity of station is maintained. He had borne much, but at this era he felt reduced to the necessity of quitting the country. He had the most exalted ideas, and accordingly went out to the Cape to settle, where he took a little public-house somewhere in the interior. He was satisfied that higher notions prevailed among the boors, and in such a land as this he would scorn to live an hour.

This incident will appear the less surprising, when it is remembered that the Man with High Notions is the identical person, who, though a resident west-ender in London from boyhood to the age of forty, had never seen St. Paul's Cathedral; the reason assigned being "that it was too far east." He has such gentlemanly ideas.

It is hardly necessary to remark that he has the nicest sense of personal honour, and the clearest views of whatever is calculated to preserve it unsullied. But he does not fire up all in an instant to avenge an injury done to it; he does not burst like a shell at every offence to his feelings. His notions are too high; they rise superior to vulgar insults. He had a whip shook over him once, but he was above it. He has high notions about being shown down stairs; and observes pleasantly enough, when referring to these misadventures, that he has a capital face for slamming a door in.

But upon a certain occasion, after he had been cut in one direction, and all but cudgelled in another, he did suddenly take fire at a foolish remark, that he had sneaked off "with his tail between his legs." He has a vast idea of the native dignity of man, the head of

the animal creation, and this insinuation he could not brook. The Man of High Notions, therefore, challenged his adversary either to *prove the tail*, to establish that appendage on a firm basis, or be convicted of falsehood. A duel was arranged, but the meeting was prevented, by his being an hour-and-a-half too late; an accident chargeable upon his chronometer, which was right to a second by the Horse Guards (for he has a high notion of that clock), though wrong by all other authority.

At another time, he meant to have called a man out, but he only called a policeman, and then dropped proceedings just as the case was coming on; for he has a peculiar idea of magistrates, and a high notion or two about newspaper reports.

But in a third affair he was more strenuous. Having scrambled out of the sloppy district of a pump, beneath whose mouth he had been illegally deposited for a limited term, which to his ideas seemed an age, having succeeded in getting himself once more together, he walked to his lawyer, and got fifteen pounds damages for the outrage; with five superadded for an extra kick, received as he was in the act of picking up his legs and arms.

Now, low persons were not wanting to declare that, as a gentleman, he could not touch the money so acquired; that he could not condescend, with his lofty ideas, to pocket the wages of disgrace, and turn his dignity to gain. What notions! They said that he must give it to the parish-school, or the Society for the Conversion of Christians to Christianity. But his thoughts took a more exalted sweep. He resolved to expend it upon a silver salver, on which, in a touching inscription, he recorded all the pathetic and triumphant circumstances of the case, for the delight and pride of his children, when he should be no more. Ah! his were high notions, truly!

On some especial points of habit and conduct, his ideas are as peculiarly elevated. We may suggest a few examples, by which the reader will easily recognise the man.

He hates the Opera, but always goes. He can do as he pleases, yet he says he is *bound*. If you urge him not to go to-night, he stares in your face, and cries, "Why, my dear sir, I *must!*" so that you begin to wonder whether it is the trombone or the violin that your friend secretly performs on. But he is right: he *must* go to the Opera: he has such high notions.

A sum is set apart for the schoolmaster, and is just ready to be claimed, when out comes the announcement of the grand revel, the tournament of dazzling attraction, at which everybody is to be present. If he had low notions, he could stop away. But what now is he to do? The ticket, dress, and journey, will swallow up the school-money, and more: but then, there is the grocer's account, and immediate payment is not imperative: so that happily there is no want of cash, and he is enabled to give the most dashing effect to his ideas.

He, with some pardonable difficulty, succeeds in persuading you to lend him a book; and, with a promise to return it on the third day, he carries off one volume of a work comprised in ten. He takes the most elevated view of the principle of lending and borrowing; and you would be sure to see your book brought back on the third day, but that on the second, he sends to borrow the remaining nine volumes; reflecting, perhaps, that a broken set is of no use to either party. Some of his notions, we must say, are rare and high; rather *too* high, like game a month old.

Well, it is by these and fifty similar signs ye shall know him. Nothing that is truly great is great to him, because his own notions, being of an immeasurable

altitude, cast it into dwarfishness: on the other hand, he can, by the natural elevation of his ideas, exalt the insignificant at his will. He is a full-length specimen of the utter littleness of life; a sample, on a large scale, of the diminutiveness of man. You may hear him talk of giving a topper to old Pelion, or patting the skiey head of blue Olympus, so astonishingly high are his notions: but never will he be able to crow on the brow of an Ossa, until he becomes literally a wart. He sometimes insinuates that he is half-ashamed to be seen living in a little shabby planet, like the earth, which is but as a tenth-rate colony, or a dirty provincial town, in the eyes of other worlds. He is disgusted that he was not born in Jupiter. He is of opinion that mortals, after all, only inhabit what he calls the "back-slums" of the universe.

The Man of High Notions always cherishes some grand ideas on the subject of a dignified death. Life, he contends, though a thing so tiny and meagre, may be made to look magnificent and gigantic, by the mere manner of quitting it. He is very angry with Napoleon for not dying at Waterloo. For himself, he should much like to get within a moderate leap of the Great Cataract, or to fling himself down the Tarpeian rock, or something of that sort. Poor little speculator! Instead of such an ending, we shall hereafter be told, and haply the tale may set us laughing rather than weeping, how, one day to astonish the world, he went up with his high notions to the top of a molehill, precipitated himself from the summit, and perished.

THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL.

AN ARTIST'S ANECDOTE.

It was my first picture. Sketches, drawings, outlines without number, I had struck off, sleeping and waking; but this was to be a *picture*, yes, my first embodied thought, my imagination's opening design.

Ardent fancy, youthful sympathy, led me out to one point. One subject only charmed my ambition in that its wild and lovely morning; it was the idea of The Poet! More glorious to my intellectual vision was he than sage or sovereign, the greatest of the earth; statesman, conqueror, philanthropist. Nay, even the abstract idea of heavenly beauty in woman, of the radiance that surrounds the innocent faces of children, was only captivating so far as it was allied to and identified with the inspiring grandeur of poetry, the sweetness and majesty crowning the poet's brow.

I resolved to paint "The Poet," and I was fortunate beyond all my hopes in obtaining a truly eligible model, a most auspicious sitter. Very poor and humble was the lad, but right regal in poetic intelligence.

My work advanced a little way, and a critic of consequence came to see it. He threw one glance upon it, and made one objection; it was fatal to the design.

"You have committed," said he, "the grand error of making your greatest of men the thinnest likewise. There is no law of nature or custom by which the bard must necessarily be lean. You are confounding a scarcity of flesh with a superabundance of spirit, and assume, possibly, that the total absence of fat involves

the presence of something ethereal. You would confound the deceased Homer with the late living skeleton. This will never do. Your poet must be fatter, or he will fail ludicrously. His eyes have no room for rolling in those bony sockets; his frenzy, at present, means nothing more than a sharp appetite. Give him flesh; the public will never know him to be a poet else. It is true, the world had a trick formerly of starving the fraternity to death; and, in the last age, a pair of lustrous eyes, surmounting a few bare bones set Surgeons'-hall fashion, would have passed upon canvas for a legitimate bard. But, in these days, bards are thriving, jovial, corpulent fellows enough; and a starved poet is a vulgar error. Fatten, fatten."

I was too young to care much about criticism; and, in this case, I was too confident, in my own true conception of the poetical, to care about it at all. I saw that of the two errors, his was the vulgar one; for it had reference to the vulgar world, and exhibited a tendency to confound the truly great with the truly stout. I took another look at my extremely thin and intellectual model, and felt that I ran no risk of missing the etherealized while painting the attenuated. To work then I went more gaily, and more secure, than before.

Yes, he was indeed thin, very. I had never before noticed how incredibly thin he was. Until the call for fat was critically raised, I had been unconscious of the amazing lankness of his illuminated visage, the astounding slimness of his youthful limbs, the famished look of his whole frame. The spirit seemed to "o'erinform" its fragile tenement of clay. He seemed rather more than ghost, but less than flesh and blood. It was as though the Apparition and the Man had met each other half way, and agreed to a compromise. Shadow and Substance had settled their differences at

last, and one could not now laugh at the other; the meeting was wonderful, the effect unique.

Yet there he sat, the personification of every idea, the deepest and the most exalted that could possibly be formed of "The Poet." The poet shone out in him, body and soul. His lean face was covered with a rich lustre; his hand, upraised, resembled the lady's in the "Siege of Corinth;"

> "It was so white and transparent of hue,
> You might have seen the moon shine through;"

and his limbs might have reposed upon a summer cloud without sinking further into it than others do into a feather bed. My utmost triumph would be attained, if I could but succeed in transferring the tender yet magnificent image before me, heightened by those necessary effects which the secrets of my art taught me, to the canvas on which the hues of truth now began rapidly to glow.

My sitter attended regularly, never missed; nor did I fail, on my part, in doing justice to his face, his form, his action, to the sentiment that threw a halo of poetry around him, to the soul that gave majesty to his slight, spare, languid frame. I looked on my canvas, and all the poet was there. I had accomplished, with nice art, that delicacy of structure, that refinement of the mere mortal substance, which was no less essential to success than the rapt glance or the speaking smile.

"There is at least none of the grossness of the flesh there," I whispered to myself; "it is all spiritual. My sitter and my own ideal of the poet are actually as one. No, the figure is not at all too thin. Oh, surely the object that would embody a heavenly nature should have as little clay about him as possible. The poet should never be fat. It is a sad mistake to give one's angels too much *embonpoint*."

Yet, as I approached my ideal, and seemed about to complete my picture, I found there was much more to do than I expected. Every day showed me some distinction between my sitter and my design upon the canvas, that had not previously been discovered. Every look convinced me of the necessity of some fresh touches not previously essential. But it was a labour of love; the toil indeed was ecstasy; and on I went working. Weeks flew, nay, months rolled on, and still left me heightening and altering, filling up and enriching; in a word, perfecting my picture; until at last the dream was a reality, the picture was finished, the poet breathed in colour, life looked from my canvas.

A crowd gathered round it on the day of exhibition, I expected many opinions, but only one was expressed. With a single voice the many decided that I had aimed at drawing a Dutch Apollo. They unanimously charged me with having stolen Dickens's Fat Boy, and clapped a pair of wings on his broad shoulders!

Fat! Well, I had anticipated objections to the colour and the drawing, the fiery visage and the skeleton figure; but to discover in my dainty, delicate, refined, ethereal youth, the counterpart of the Fat Boy.

I listened, and to my utter and inexpressible astonishment, they were all in earnest. So in a short time was all the world. Everybody had heard of prize-poems; and everybody saw in my design the representation of a prize-poet obese as a prize-ox!

And all the world was quite right! The objection had no sooner settled in my head, than my eyes opened upon my extraordinary mistake. Unconsciously, indeed, I had followed the advice of my critic friend to corpulency; and I now, for the first time, plainly saw, as clearly revealed as it had been hidden from me before, the maddening truth that my slim and all but winged

divinity had become, under my fastidious and fondly-labouring pencil, heavy, lumpish, fat. My flying fish was a porpoise.

But under what magical influences had I committed such an error with my eyes open, producing the very effect I would religiously have avoided! Under none. I had found my model slight, spare, and spiritual; I recognised in him the very person of the true poet; and I continued month after month to transfer to my canvas all that my searching eye could detect in his corporeal mould and in his mental nature. Alas! I very innocently *paid* my model the sum agreed upon at the close of every sitting! I was very foolishly stone-blind to the natural effects of so many half-crowns dropped into the pocket of the hungry.

He was at first poor and pinched; thought, study, and the fiery mind working out its way, seemed to have wreaked their vengeance upon his frame; and I gratefully paid him double for his sitting again and again. He then began to pick up, as they say; but my eye, deceived by the original image reflected, and left glowing on my mind, beheld not this slow slight change. His limbs grew by insensible degrees much rounder, but to me they daily appeared the same; his sunken cheeks now plumped, his throat and shoulders prospered more and more, and his chest gradually got on in the world; yet I saw still the same pallid, thoughtful, passion-lighted visage, the same fragile and delicate body, the same thin wan hands, though they were by this time deeply dimpled with fat round every knuckle.

He grew wide apace, and daily received the fee with a truly unpoetical punctuality, and daily did he return, with the *mens divinior* more profoundly embedded, I should say rather engulphed, in a world of happy, conscious, and luxuriant flesh. As regularly, therefore,

week by week, did I alter and add to my design, expanding my outline, filling my hollows, and fattening my poet; wondering still to find how far I was from the point I seem to have approached, that there was ever something fresh to do, and that before I had worked many days at the head, the body needed a new enlargement. I began at a consumption and left off at a dropsy.

Thus do all of us too often toil to realise the truth of our young dreams, blind to everything, throughout the anxious and unrewarding work, save the one glowing and exalted image, which enchanted us at first, but exists no longer; and thus does the comfortable and sympathising world laugh at our labour of love, recognising in our poetic vision a satire and a burlesque, and in our cherubim and seraphim nothing but fat boys with feather jackets!

THE MUTUAL PIECE-OF-PLATE PRESENTATION CLUB.

A LITTLE preliminary plain English; an illustrative prologue, not a flourish of trumpets; will be sufficient to lead the moral self-respecting reader, by an easy and natural train of reflection, to a proper appreciation of the objects contemplated by this new Society; of whose prospects as well as purposes we are happily enabled to offer an exclusive account.

It may be true enough that there is nothing which the world produces in such vast and superabundant quantities, as Merit. The daily supply is, no doubt, at least equal to a three-months' demand. But what is merit unrecognised, unrecompensed! Virtually, of no

more consequence than an unfeathered peacock. Merit, without its reward and certificate, is a mere Frenchman without the ribbon of the Legion. The pure coin of gold or silver which everybody is in a conspiracy not to take, is of no more use to its owner, practically of no greater value, than the detected counterfeit. The claim to rank as "Most Noble," or to have a legal right to be addressed as "My Lord Duke," seems too absurd, when nobody, from one end of life to the other, will consent to call us anything but "You Dick!"

We want to see merit universally acknowledged, obtaining a lawful stamp, wearing accredited honours, and carrying its credentials about with it; if in no weightier form than a snuff-box or a tooth-pick, subscribed for by admiring friends. We look eagerly for the dawning of the great day of philanthropy, when every man shall be able to refer to some more shining, more tangible testimony of his own manifold excellences, than his own bare word; pertinaciously contradicted, perhaps, by spiteful neighbours, who have known him all his days. And this bright dawn we may now hope to behold full soon; a dawn of best-plated, of real silver, and of silver-gilt; through the medium of the proposed association, described as the Mutual Piece-of-Plate Club for the encouragement of social virtues, the publicity of private character, and the elevation of bashful retiring merit upon a flaring brazen pedestal.

There can be little doubt that the world would have been a witness of its own virtue and glory in this respect long ago, but for the rooted prejudices existing among certain orders of moralists, who, though themselves eminently meritorious, are bitterly opposed to a general recognition of merit, and to all extension of its rewards and honours.

It is argued by these enemies to remunerated merit,

who are of course inimical to the projected Piece-of-Plate Club, that the principle advocated strikes at the root of every constituted establishment in the country; nay, of every institution within the boundaries of civilisation. They allege it to be a doctrine which never yet found favour in any age of the world; it was never tolerated but as a fable in any school; never practised but in caprice in any state; and that, above all, to adopt such a rule here in England, would be equivalent to turning the globe completely over into the air, and bringing New Zealand where the Observatory on Greenwich-hill is.

Institute such a principle as the recognition and reward of merit, and how, these moralists contend, will you provide for the extraordinary rush upwards in life which must instantaneously take place! Society would all at once become "top-heavy;" the people would be all head.

How carry on a war with an army nine-tenths officers! How maintain a representative government with electors all members of Parliament to a man! Could you enforce the game-laws, they urge, when every poacher turned out to be a justice of peace; or expect the due performance of multitudinous marriages, christenings, and burials, when every harassed jaded curate had dozed himself into a deanery, and was already dreaming of the mitre. It really might be dangerous, this we may fairly own, to make all your midshipmen rear-admirals at a move.

How would you get your play acted, they cry, when the whole company, including, of course, the "starved apothecary," claimed an equal right, on the score of merit, to be Romeo! In fact, how could the stage go on at all if merit were allowed to make its way on it! How prevent the boards from being crowded with

young Norvals, down to the very float-lights! How stay the aspiring and meritorious call-boy, in his rush forward to seek collision with the rival Douglas there before him, whom he must be seen dashing scornfully aside, with, "*Your* name is Norval? Never. *My* name is Norval," *et cetera*. And this also may be a grave consideration with some of us: who on earth is to pay us our dividends, when every little clerk in Threadneedle-street is figuring as a Bank Director, which is sure to be the case the instant real merit shall be recognised!

These arguments may be taken for whatever they are worth, without seriously affecting our faith in the proposed Club. More importance, perhaps, is due to other moral objections to which we are bound to allude: that a handsome recognition of merit often acts upon it as a sentence of expatriation, and that its reward is sometimes as an extinguisher to its luminous properties. It may be worth while to reflect whether we have not, before now, entirely lost sight of merit, by securing for it its due recompense and honour.

While your friend is unfortunate, neglected, and obscure; while his merit droops and pines in the bleak wintry shade of the world, and is only heard of at all to be scorned and denied; while it continues to be impossible, or nearly so, to persuade any man of ordinary acuteness that your despised friend is not a rank cheat; so long he is all your own: but when he has been proclaimed no impostor, but a hero; when he has found all the long-missing honours; when his merits are handsomely acknowledged, and Virtue publicly owns her stray child, who is to be henceforth the pet; you feel that you have shaken hands with him for the last time. Fortune's note of "Welcome!" sounded like "Adieu!" He has gone where "Glory waited him," and where

you are not wanted. While you alone spoke, your voice had a wondrous charm; but the world now echoes it, and he only cares for the echo. If you had desired his further companionship, you should have conspired with the rest to keep his merits a secret, and to crush him. But you have obtained for him a crown of laurel, and not being used to it, it falls down over his eyes, so that he can hardly see you at all.

The effect of this is, to beget in many minds the suspicion, that merit is only merit while nobody takes the smallest notice of it; that there are such things as spectral virtues, which vanish into invisibility with the light.

To these, as to the former class of objections, the sage and moral reader will give what ear he pleases. For ourselves, having suggested to him, though with brevity, a sufficient caution and guardedness, we proceed to unfold the principles and purposes of the association now about to be founded.

The idea of a "Mutual Piece-of-Plate Presentation Club" was first conceived by a few estimable members of society, whose merit, while possessing many characteristics, is pre-eminently distinguished as of the kind called "modest." Having been subscribers, upon at least half-a-dozen rapidly succeeding occasions, to funds for the purchase of pieces of plate to be presented to friends and acquaintances of about equal intellectual pretensions and moral standing with themselves, it not unnaturally occurred to their minds, sharpened as their perceptions were by these repeated applications for two guineas, that it would be a shorter, a more delicate, and a far more economical way, to establish a regular merit-discerning and plate-presenting society: of which every one willing to subscribe, and possessed of sufficient virtue, public or private, might become a member, in the exalted certainty of securing, each in his turn, a

glorious heir-loom, a touching and touchable tribute to his character, a memento of his perfections or a token of his services, rewarding them while living, and descending a lasting legacy to his posterity, in what seductive and insidious shape soever—salver or epergne, tea-service, cup, or candelabra.

It was easy to perceive, on the instant, that the idea involved numerous points of superiority to the practice hitherto in operation, as respects presentation pencil-cases, snuff-boxes, soup-tureens, and wine-coolers. Everybody knows that the present practice is, for some backward, blushing, modest creature, who has been serving his country for years and nobody the wiser—or ennobling the name of his species, utterly unnoticed and unheard of—to get some conspicuously impudent friend to start the project of a piece of plate, with a subscription of ten guineas to begin with, which is, of course, never to be paid, save by the bashful cup-hunter himself; who is also good for sundry other subscriptions, entered at Coutts' and Drummond's; "Anonymous" giving five guineas, "John Smith, Esq.," three, and a "Friend to Retiring Merit," ten; to say nothing of several "Admirers," and a column or two of Initialists, put down for small sums at the end, to make up the protracted and unprocurable balance. But a check for a moderate amount covers the whole; and, after all, the heir-loom, with its handsome rims and handles, is devilish cheap.

Another plan, highly popular amongst a more audacious order of claimants, is to call on half-a-dozen influential acquaintances, and boldly avow that a splendid central ornament, with an appropriate inscription, is an object of considerable importance to their prospects, and of most anxious desire; promising to do as much for every one of them in turn, and exhibiting,

at the same time, a neat prospectus, with a printed list of the committee; which at once makes it quite too late to withdraw their names, and highly expedient that they should collectively curse their friend's assurance, and put down individually a guinea.

Not to improve upon such experiments is impossible. They may not invariably fail, but they always involve great hazard of failure, much hard work, and pitiful discomfiture. Even after the plate has been presented and sent home, and while it stands on the sideboard, an object of curiosity to envious visitors, it is awkward for the otherwise fortunate and honoured owner of the tribute to be compelled to account for the anomalous nature of the design; to explain why there is nothing to be seen but serpents twisting about, and to lament that there were not funds enough, the subscription having perversely closed just as the work advanced to the present interesting point, for a young Hercules to strangle them. To be sure the omission has left a guinea or two extra for the engraver, who has elaborated the magnificent inscription accordingly, and given,

"An honest man 's the noblest work of God,"

with surpassing effect.

Now, not only by the plan contemplated in the mutual-tribute principle of the new club, will all such inconveniences and humiliations be avoided, but the candidate for the honours of a piece of plate will be enabled to take altogether a higher stand. His will be a more exalted, because a more moral position. His deserts will be fully recognised, and no thanks to anybody. He will not be placed in that equivocal niche of fame, wherein he is only elevated to glory by the kind partiality of friends. He will be most independent of the world, while in the act of reaping its honours. He

will be crowned as the deserved, the admired possessor of genius and virtue; but he will honourably find his own laurels. *His* splendid tribute will be voted to him generously, not grudgingly. Whenever he may choose to give a dinner, his guests will have no opportunity of nudging each other, and circulating the whisper, "He sponged upon *us* for the spoons," or "*I* paid for those salt-cellars."

Moreover, upon this newly-devised club-plan every candidate for the glories of gold or silver-gilt, will, while relieved from a shabby dependence on his friends, enlist them notwithstanding in his service, and make them contributors to his honour. To his pride they will administer; with his pomp and splendour they will be associated; he will owe much to their honourable alliance, and nothing to their bounty.

Again: as all the piece-of-plate presentations must necessarily be regulated by the golden rule, do as you would be done by, the particular merit of each member, entitling him in turn to a tribute, will always be enhanced by that rarest of merits which consists in acknowledging other people's. By the first constituting law of the club, no man can secure the honours due to his own virtue, without first joining in a testimonial to his neighbour's. Need we say another word in advocacy of the moral beauty of the plan!

This point, however, may be here lightly noticed. If excellence is to have its piece of plate, there can be no harm in seeing that the tribute has the hall-mark upon it. In other words, when we are receiving a reward, reason tells us to look to the value and fashion of it. Now, here the club opens up a great field of advantage; for the meritorious man may not only secure his reward, but select the very pattern of it.

By the plate-presentations, common in society, a man

too often gets what he has not the slightest want of. His friends spy out his virtues, and handsomely agree to give him what he has no wish for. Silver, in any form, except the one it takes, the boot-jack form, would exactly suit him; gold, in any shape but that of a shaving-dish, would be eminently attractive. But he must take what is offered, though it be absurdly inappropriate. He must take it with gratitude too, though it be useless. Through his smiling hollow thanks, he half blushes to think that the maxim, "beggars must not be choosers," is not entirely inapplicable in his melancholy case. The reflection does not help to make him feel that he has anything to be thankful for.

It is, possibly, in the discontent thus produced, that we must seek the hidden reason why so many beautiful memorials, the gift of admiring subscribers, are to be picked up cheap at the pawnbrokers' and the curiosity-shops.

How widely different will be the feelings engendered by the principle of the new club! There, every gentleman, having paid up his subscriptions and become duly qualified for a testimonial, will be consulted as to its form and substance. If he happen to want a breakfast-service of silver, he will not be obligingly presented with a diamond snuff-box; and should he happen to prefer a classic vase, elegantly chased, he will not be expected to fall into grateful raptures with a set of dish covers. Truly, there is some distinction between one tribute and another; and there is no reason why Virtue should be utterly indifferent to the intrinsic value of her testimonial. Humility may be content with a certificate of character written on vellum; but that foolish virtue ought to know that gold is far more durable, and of most excellent solidity for inscriptions.

We must now, having premised thus far, in a spirit

not uncongenial, it is hoped, with the gentle reader's, venture to afford him a little insight into the constitution of the club itself; admitting him to a peep at its machinery and prospects. All is far too incomplete at present for full disclosure, but we may glance briefly at a few of its proposed

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

The desire for honour, that is to say, for a friendly testimony to those qualities of "head and heart" which secure admiration and social esteem, is in all cases to be held as *primâ facie* evidence of the possession of them. In other words, the wish to attain, and to dispense too, the honours distributable by the club, is to be taken as ample qualification for admission as a member.

A subscription of (blank) guineas is to be paid in advance by each member; and the funds so raised are to be exclusively devoted to the purchase of pieces of plate, bearing suitable inscriptions, testifying to the peculiar gifts (moral or intellectual), and to the eminent services (public or private), of the several members of the society; such memorials to be presented by the general body, with due honours and ceremonies, to each individual, until the compliment paid by equal friendship has been equally experienced by all, and the tributary fire has, like an electric chain, encircled the Club.

For priority of tribute lots shall be drawn. In reference to the design, the taste of the receiver-elect himself shall especially be consulted. With regard to the inscription to be placed on the splendid gift, the form thereof shall be decided upon by a committee, of which the respected winner of the memorial shall be an honorary member, that he may be present while it is being

drawn up, to give accurate information as to his virtues and talents.

Every tribute to exalted excellence so voted by the Club, and paid for out of the subscription fund, shall be registered and regarded as a spontaneous free-will offering of heart-felt devotion and admiring regard, presented by the disinterested friends whose names are there inscribed.

While every recipient of club-honours is free to choose the pattern of his piece of plate, each will be expected to receive it exclusively as a testimonial to his own merits, and no bashful or super-virtuous member can be allowed to substitute for his set of silver tankards, richly embossed with delicacies of Bacchanalian device, a necklace and bracelet for his wife.

Each memorial, as voted by the Club, shall be of a stated value; but the member-elect may enrich the tribute, turning silver into gold, or gilding it, at his own cost, upon making a proportioned and specified contribution to the funds.

The inscription, as adopted by the Committee, shall, in like manner, be considered as fixed, and declaratory of the universal sentiment; but each elected subject of the eulogies of the Club may alter, heighten, re-arrange, and add to such eulogies in his own case, on the terms indicated by the preceding regulation.

No member, however, can be allowed to make the least abatement in such encomiums, or diminish, reduce, or subtract from, any praises accorded to him by a vote of the Club, on any pretence whatever; and every offence so arising from undue modesty on the part of a member, must be visited by a forfeiture of the testimonial. The discharge of such painful duties will, it is hoped, be seldom called for.

The scale on which contributions, in purchase of the

privileges specified, must always be regulated, will be equitably adjusted. Invariably, the highest intellectual qualities must be acknowledged by the highest rate of payment; and, as a general rule, it may be remarked that the assignment of intellectual gifts to a member must be paid for more liberally than moral excellence of an equal extent. So, too, it may be understood as a necessary regulation, that all recognitions of public virtue, on tributes presented by the Society, would prove costlier to the member honoured than the most lavish record of private virtue or the enumeration of personal accomplishments, for the obvious reason that they are so much more rare and valuable!

Thus, such phrases as "an ornament of the social circle," "an undeviating practiser of the domestic virtues," "the stedfast champion of the rights of friendship," and "the invariable promoter of disinterested philanthropy;" these, though eminently desirable in the catalogue of claims to an undying regard, are praises commonly attainable on no extravagant terms: but if it should happen that the member eulogised, desired to add to the testimonial, "the enlightener of his age, and an honour to his country," the designation would, of course, involve an additional outlay.

No member who was honoured in the Club for his virtues merely, and who had but contributed according to the scale in that case made and provided, could be allowed to squeeze into his inscription the obscurest hint about his genius, without a further contribution to the funds. "Admired and esteemed in all the relations of life" would be readily admissible; but the most distant allusion to "immortal fame" must be regarded as a special insertion to be effected on the usual terms. A motion that the word "advertisement" should be prefixed, has, however, been negatived.

The regulations of this friendly institution allude to another point which equally shows a discriminating spirit, in marking the boundaries of eulogy, and ensuring fair play and full protection to every member in his turn. A simple order of encomium, entirely deserved, and not lavish in any respect, is provided for by the brotherly feeling of the Club. A higher rate of eulogy may be specially arrived at, by the liberality and enthusiasm; rather, let us say, the superior self-knowledge, of the individual member appointed to receive the honour of the tribute. But there is a third degree of eulogium, of a still more special kind, which is only to be attained by the boldest self-approval, and a most ungrudging sacrifice. This will occur, whenever the introduction of names illustrious in history is demanded, with a view to particular reference and indirect comparison. Nothing points praise like a great name dexterously introduced; and nothing, according to the just degree of the mutual-tribute Club, should be so richly recompensed.

Thus, to speak proportionably, shillings might reasonably suffice for contributions, when the designation was that of simple "philanthropist;" but guineas would be too poor to buy the honour of being ranked as "a follower in the foot-prints of Howard." Any member of the Club, if he had sat in Parliament during a single session only, could find little difficulty in getting rated as a "lawgiver of a liberal turn of mind and an enlarged way of thinking;" but if his ambition demanded that he be styled "a direct descendant from Lycurgus," the exchequer of the Club would instinctively yawn for its deposit.

Every youthful patriot, when he had drawn his lot, would have a clear right to ascertain that patriotism was distinctly mentioned in the inscription upon his heir-

loom; but a delicate allusion to Hampden or Washington could not be so cheaply conceded. So with the poetical members of the Society. When the voice of the Club had ranked them, without extra charge, as "children of the Muses," the ends of a generous justice had been reached. Should the young poets crave an express mention of Homer or Shakspeare; should they hint at a distant and respectful comparison, in the inscriptions upon their gilt cigar-cases, to Collins, Burns, or Keats; their modesty must be content to blush in golden coins, paid into the treasury of the Club.

The fortunate members of the Mutual Piece-of-Plate Presentation Society, will also find that a scale of expenditure, admirably arranged, has been settled in relation to the various domestic and social virtues, for which they may incline to be considered famous. An assignment of some of the best of these beautiful qualities is to be secured, engraven on the precious metals, at little more than prime cost. The abstemious and sober member drawing the lucky ticket for his tribute, will not only obtain assent to his design; Temperance on a tea-urn sighing at Bacchus, but the Club will add the inscription without charge. On the other hand, the intemperate member, who, beneath a crowd of festive devices on his goblets and sauce dishes, is anxious to introduce a stealthy insinuation touching the moderation of his appetite, must pay roundly.

As a general rule, we should say, that those members who would record as their chief characteristics upon their heir-looms, the qualities most opposite to their own in the flesh, would be the largest contributors to the funds of the Club. The larger the hypocrisy the greater the expense. Conjugal fidelity seems to rank high in cost. "An honest man" is almost a matter of course. "An affectionate son," "a fond father," are

encomiums to be admitted, if desired, on every testimonial; but "a husband, whose inviolable constancy was beyond suspicion," rises into the class of special eulogy, and ensures, by its comparative rarity, a contribution to the fund.

After all, we have touched but on a few of the details by which the principle of the projected institution is hereafter to be worked out. As we hear more, we may reveal more. But sufficient for the present is the moral remark with which we close: that if the design should save but *one* gentleman from an intrusion upon his privacy by a deputation to present him with a piece of plate, subscribed for on the hitherto approved plan, the projectors of the Mutual Piece-of-Plate Presentation Club will not have lived in vain!

EVERYBODY'S VISITOR AND NOBODY'S GUEST.

Yes, he is the guest of Sorrow, the companion of Fatigue. A philosopher of the peripatetic school, ever on foot, we have asked him, for once, to take a chair, and sit—shall we say for his caricature? no, but for a sketch of his moral lineaments and physical condition. Reader, you know him; for he is every reader's constant visitor; but you have perhaps scarcely ever bestowed a single sympathising thought upon him; albeit you recognise in him a mighty and never-idle agent of civilisation, an essential instrument of social communication, a link between heart and heart otherwise separated, a unit drawing millions together; an ever-winding channol of intercourse, bringing the stream of intelligence to every man's door; a society, in his sole self, for the diffusion of all useful know-

ledge. Reader, receive as a guest for once, your daily visitor, the Postman. A recent change, that has cruelly affected him, gives him a claim upon your sympathy. He is not what he was; we fear to think of what he may be.

Alas! it is too true; a change has come over the spirit of the Postman's dream. His day has reached its post-meridian. Thus far he has walked through life, soaked with rain sometimes, but soon dried by sunshine; henceforward he must perambulate amidst unmingled gloom—no, not walking, but merely dragging one leg after the other.

Ere we glance at the sad circumstance in which this change consists, let us turn back into the past, and accompany him on his diurnal round. We shall find him in his prescribed motion as regular as the sun; though he claims not to be the Apollo, but only the Mercury, of letters. He puts on part of a pair of shoes, indulges his head with a certain portion of hat, and sallies forth upon his epistolary errand. We see at once that he is the postman surnamed Twopenny; he who executes his functions in what may be called half-dress, affording a striking contrast with the full field-marshal's coat of the General.

Look at that terrible packet of letters, tied round with a string, each of which he half turns up, one by one, to see if all are rightly sorted, and arranged according to the regular succession of streets and numbers. And here one's sympathy certainly sustains a momentary check. It is impossible, even while we commiserate, to help feeling sensible of a natural touch of envy; for happy is he, so experience tells us, who has merely to deliver all those letters, and who is exempt from the reading of any. How innocent is he of their contents! How harmless they are in his eyes! How little prone

are his thoughts to penetrate into those folded mysteries! How blank are the insides to him who is only bent on deciphering the addresses! How utterly unconscious he appears of the agitation, the anguish, the mortal throes, the mental agony, he is carrying in embryo between that left arm of his and his heart! Ah! little does he know that every step he takes, hurrying on to the completion of his task, hastens perhaps a fellow-creature into the prison or the grave. The only reflection that occurs to him in delivering (for example) that cruel notice of process (the hand is the hand of an attorney's clerk) is, that the direction is very plainly written, and the number in the corner perfectly distinct.

> "A letter sent by Lawyer Grim,
> A wafered letter is to him,
> And it is nothing more."

Observe this, with a black seal. He does not even notice the proclamation of sad tidings; he looks only at the address, which is written with a trembling hand in characters far less legible than the last; he thinks it a shame that people won't write plainer; and gives his double knock, not dreaming that it is a death-knell. He takes the twopence, and whistles as he crosses over the way to leave the dinner-invitation at No. 11, which to him produces exactly the same result—twopence. He knows of no other possible consequence. The blissful ignorance of his nature, deepened and made happier by daily habit, contemplates but a mere twopence in all cases. The failure of your agent; the misfortune which your dear boy, who detests gambling, happened to meet with at No. something in the Quadrant; long stories from sincere friends at a distance about the children's hooping-cough and the blight of the apple-blossoms; obliging applications for the loan

of your Wordsworth, which you have just had bound; a demand for orders for six, either for Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden, your acquaintance being (although you never saw him but once) so very good as not to mind which; epistolary insults, annoyances and calamities of every class; all these are alike to the Postman: mere occasions for paying twopences. If he have any thought at all about letters, it is that they are very pleasant and friendly things to get hold of. For although we have said that he is nobody's guest, he once in five years finds in his packet a letter for himself; from an old rheumatic associate in the suburbs, asking him to tea on Sunday; an agreeable wind-up to his weekly labours, and the more welcome as the letter is post-paid; for in his circle paying the post is no violation of politeness.

We have here put the best face on the matter. That exemption from the misery of *opening* letters is certainly a bright feature of his lot. But the other side of the picture is dull almost to desolation. He is out at all hours, in all seasons; at the sultry noon, the stormy eve; May and December equally alike, find him a pedestrian. He is a *walking* likeness of Patience on a monument. He is a wanderer on the face of the metropolis. His feet are sore, his limbs sink under him, ere his many-winding journey is half over; but it is his arm that aches most, his fingers that are numb with fatigue; their strength is spent with overknocking, with pulling gate-bells, and rapping at the heads of lions, griffins, and gorgons. From house to house he goes, and nowhere finds admittance. He knocks and the door is opened unto him; but weary as he is, nobody asks him to walk in. He cannot even indulge in a minute's gossip with the maid on the doorstep. He has no leisure, as the baker has, for an innocent flirta-

tion. To the prettiest damsel that ever opened door, he has only time to say, "Tibbs, esquire, twopence;" not a word about her eyes. The damsel, indeed, dislikes him, for his knock affects her nerves, and he calls out to her to "make haste;" she hates making haste. These hardships are a part of his ordinary and inevitable experience; but he has numberless accidental ills; vain hunts after those who are "gone away;" wearying inquiries for people "not known in King-street;" infinite toil and disappointment in taking letters to the wrong Mr. Smith.

But if his lot has been thus dreary in the past, how darker than Erebus is its future aspect! The stamp-duty is reduced, and *his* duty will be doubled! The weight of the whole press is on the Postman; we have lessened the burden of one to increase that of the other. His mind staggered before, his body must now totter also. The difference of burden is that difference between a sheet of letter-paper and a double "Atlas." Additional millions of broad sheets are to be put in the post; and if these must be delivered, who shall deliver the Postman? Pale cheeks there were, and saddened hearts, in the newspaper-department of the Post-office, when the first weekly supplies of penny stamps were brought in, heaped in huge bundles, for transmission into the country. Enormous packages of the old unstamped, with the red mark of legality affixed to them for the first time, were laid down one by one before the wide-staring eyes of the appointed receiver. He stood aghast at the omen.

"And are these," he asked, "these many bundles, each of them a load, are they all *one paper?* Has it only a country circulation, and are we to transmit it? Why, there are several of the unstamped besides this; and those also are legalised. There are, moreover,

half-a-dozen new papers. Is the Post-office to despatch them all, in addition to the increase upon the old papers daily and weekly? Impossible! If this is a specimen of the change, then farewell, for ever, blessed peace of mind; farewell content! Mr. ——," he continued, turning to a petrified postman standing by, "we can never stand against this new system. This is really too bad. Our carts will break down under this new load; they were never built for such work. Look here, here's a package to go by post. None of our machinery will stand it; the thing can't be done. But the trial must be made, I suppose, and Heaven pity us under it, say I. I guess what we have to go through, I see it all. Well; here, you Jem, try and lift this package out of the way; they must all go, they're legal I find, all *stamped!*"

His imagination daily threw deeper shadows upon a prospect gloomy enough in itself. Within a week from the hour when the first penny stamp was passed through the Post-office, the sensitive and forlorn functionary, whose words we have recorded almost verbatim, was dead. We are far from being sure that the feverish excitement and morbid apprehensiveness evinced in his first anticipation of the destructive change, are not to be regarded as the direct cause of the calamity. Beyond a doubt they were the predisposing causes of dissolution. He "saw it all," as he believed; and persuaded himself, from the evidences furnished on the first morning, that a state of things had begun which the "oldest inhabitant" of the Post-office might quake to look upon. The fear of the "pressure from without," impelled him suddenly onward into the grave.

If the new system should produce but a thousandth part of the toil, pain, harassing and hopelessness, anticipated as its natural effects by its first victim,

what a dreary destiny must the Postman's be! One drop added to a full cup produces the overflow; the last feather breaks the tough back of the camel: thus the last newspaper, the one extra sheet, must weigh down the pitiable carrier, body as well as spirit to the dust. And a heavy, heavy additional burden is he doomed to bear. His daily walk is prolonged; his double knocks perchance are doubled. In the country the extent of his delivery is threefold at least; in the metropolis it is frightfully extended, for the newspaper is charged but half-price. For a single penny you receive your newspaper in town; the consequence is that many thousands are passed into the Postman's hands, which otherwise he would have escaped. Nor must it be forgotten, that as this becomes known, the evil will increase. The wanderer will have no respite from perambulation; the walking gentleman will never have time to sit down. He will move on, the very personification of the Movement; the realizer of the Perpetual Motion; the legitimate son of Restlessness. "Walker's Dictionary" will furnish no superlative epithet capable of describing the ceaselessness of his pedestrianism, the monotony of his miserable toil. Yes, *his* long lane will present no turning; not a hope can visit him in the thick meshes of that despair which surrounds him wherever he goes. His life will not be life, but merely mechanical motion, the action of the moving wax-figure which passes him in triumphal procession as he proceeds on his round. Happy unconsciousness! Thrice-fortunate art thou, oh! waxen wanderer! The mechanism by which the Postman passes onward to his destined stopping-place; the pause of a moment; involves a living sensibility to the pang of every movement; yet on he must go. Punch and Judy may hold out temptations to stay, for a minute only, at the corner

of the street; but in vain for him. His fate is a relentless one. Were visions of Paradise suddenly opened upon his gaze as he crosses the end of an unpropitious turning, he dare not pause even to gaze, still less turn a letter's breadth out of his way. He must leave the uppermost epistle of the pack in the next street: he has no choice: he cannot comprehend what the voluntary principle means. Passive obedience is his doctrine; he never dreams of having a will of his own. He seems to travel forward freely, and to cross the street as though he really deemed himself a native of a land of liberty; but he is a bondman. He walks through life with the gait of a willing agent; yet ever as he walks, wears fetters, clankless and invisible.

PORTRAITS OF NOTORIOUS CHARACTERS.

No. 1.—THE THEATRICAL LESSEE.

THE theatrical lessee is a practical logician. Being destitute of money, he enters into contracts, binding himself to pay some fifty thousand pounds per annum: being equally destitute of morals, he undertakes to provide rational entertainment for a "discerning public." Peculiarly innocent of all idea of the uses and objects of the stage, he resolves upon taking the drama under his special protection. In short, having nothing to lose, he determines to risk all he is worth; being *Dogberry*, he becomes constable of the watch, as the "most desartless man." He regards Shakspeare as an author properly honoured in having his statue erected *outside* the theatre: he confesses that if "Hamlet" were now to be offered him, an entirely new play, he would not produce it; unless, perhaps, the author undertook to appear as the

Ghost. As an indifferently bad actor, even Shakspeare would have a claim upon him. He evinces his understanding of the scope and principle of the drama, when he observes, "We don't want *literature*, we want *pieces*." He objects to all productions that have much "talk" in them; they only tend to encourage the high-priced actors. First-rate performers he looks upon as necessary evils, and he engages them, one at a time, at short intervals: third-rates are his favourites, because they show by their acting that the "regular drama sends people to sleep;" they *prove* that Shakspeare "don't draw!" That is the only point which he conscientiously struggles to establish: that the public despises excellence: and upon the truth of his proposition *his* chance of being tolerated depends. He may, however, be brought to forgive an actor for being a genius, always providing that he is not likewise a gentleman: the actor who introduces gentlemanly habits into the theatre is supposed to offer a personal insult to the lessee. In like manner he resents, as becomingly as he can, the impertinent superiority of the few ladies of his company who obstinately maintain the singularity of unsullied virtue; purity of character he considers to be a disgrace to his establishment. His remonstrance is, "I may as well shut up my theatre at once, if common decency is to be observed." The interests of the stage require that every pretty actress should listen to honourable green-room proposals, and submit to a change of viscounts occasionally, at the suggestion, and for the accommodation, of the lessee. The qualifications of an actress are thought to depend upon the question, not "what she can do?" but, "whose cab brought her to the theatre?" The actor he engages on the strength of his lungs, the actress on the strength of her legs. If compelled, by perverse fortune, to come to terms with the first tragedian of the day, and to engage

him for the entire season, the lessee resorts to every imaginable expedient of personal and professional annoyance, of low insult and irritation, to drive him from the theatre in disgust, just at the moment when the example of his high name and the exercise of his fine genius are supposed to be no longer essentially requisite. He begins by "biting his thumb" to provoke, and ends by biting the finger of the irritated. If we take the portrait of the lessee in another attitude, we find him instructing counsel to prove him "a rogue and a vagabond according to Act of Parliament;" proclaiming himself a violator of the law, in having acted forbidden tragedies and comedies, and showing that the man who had lent him the purchase-money can have no partnership in the profits of illegality. The lessee closes the house for his own advantage and accommodation, and stops one-third of the company's salary; he replies to the general remonstrance, however, with the assurance that all who demand it shall be paid; and those who ask find him better than his word, for he not only discharges their claims, but them also. The lessee has one favourite plan; to reduce salaries when business falls off: he has another favourite plan; to forget to raise them again when business revives. His statesmanship consists in making his actors take share in his losses, and not in his gains. His idea of attraction is opposed to every law of physics: for, when his audiences are scanty, he thinks his company too numerous: the public will not come, and he proceeds to discharge some of his actors; his treasury is low, and he takes decisive steps to diminish the receipts. A blank box-book suggests to him the propriety, not of adding to, but of lessening the attraction; when a forty-horse power is not enough, says the lessee, a thirty must be tried. The lessee's sayings and doings all tend consistently to one point;

all tend to lower public taste, to taint public morals, to lessen public amusement; to subvert the stage, to degrade the actor, to destroy the very profession; to dishonour the drama, to repress imagination, and dry up the springs of human sympathy; to make the existing generation scoff where their fathers admired and reverenced, and to render a noble and humanizing art a mere convenience for ignorant pretension, licentious intrigue, and sordid speculation.

THE "OLDEST INHABITANT."

THE Oldest Inhabitant's mind is a blank memorandum-book, his head is a wallet "wherein he puts alms for oblivion." His experience convinces him, more and more every day, that London is situate on the banks of Lethe. Ask him for the date of an event, and, if of modern occurrence, he has a distinct recollection of having forgotten it; if referable to a remoter period, he forgets whether he remembers it or not. He knows that he is of an ancient family, but cannot for his life tell what has become of his ancestors: he conjectures with much shrewdness that his forefathers must be dead. His father, who was a soldier, had been, he thinks, in the same regiment with the celebrated Captain Shandy, and knew him well. His crest is a fore-finger with a piece of thread fastened round it; his motto, "Non mi ricordo." He thinks he can recollect having seen his grandmother when she was a little girl, and is quite positive that his parents died *without issue*. He is puzzled to know when, where, and how he acquired possession of a daughter; and conceives that his son must now be quite old enough to be his own father. He, however, distinctly remembers the events of his boyhood: the name of the head master of Christ's

Hospital in those days was the Rev. Cornelius Nepos; one of his schoolfellows was called Alcibiades; he is not certain that Julius Cæsar was in the same class with himself, but he has a vague notion that they were a good deal in each other's company. He is confident that he passed a considerable portion of his time, when a lad, at a place called Troy; though he cannot now call to mind the county in which it is situate. Among the minor matters that perplex him is the circumstance, that one corner of his pocket-handkerchief is always *tied in a knot*, and he never can tell why. His memory belongs rather to the past century than to the present. Of all the days in the year yesterday perplexes him most; old events are newest in his mind, the past brightens as it grows remote, and, as he facetiously remarks, he can hardly get a glimpse of Time till he is out of sight. Thus, he cherishes a settled conviction that her Majesty Queen Anne has actually departed this life; although on the tenth of last November he was wholly at a loss to guess why the Lord Mayor's show (at which he was present) was put off the day before. Of all public characters of the past generation, he best remembers the person of Junius. Robinson Crusoe he never saw but once, and cannot speak as to the accuracy of his portraits. He has a lively sense of the excitement created by the shocking murder of Mrs. Brownrigg, who was hanged in a coalhole by her two infamous apprentices; and tells you of the public sympathy which formerly existed in favour of a young man named Gregory Barnwell, who was inhumanly stabbed by his own uncle at Peckham. He is also quite clear in the matter of Warren Hastings, only he is not positive whether that gentleman was tried, or transported for seven years. The latest London event of any note which he unhesitatingly remembers, is the grand gathering

in the City, when the Allied Sovereigns, with the veteran Blucher and the Duke of Marlborough, dined with Sir Richard Whittington in Guildhall. Indeed, there are few events that he would not be able to recollect, if he could but call them to mind. His memory has but one defect, a want of retentiveness. Yet, after all, he remembers Garrick's maiden speech in Parliament, and retains his first impression of the inimitable beauty of Munden's Macbeth. His health is often drunk in the City; this is spoiling a fine compliment; they should drink—his *memory!*

THE EDITOR. (BY ONE.)

THE EDITOR is the dupe of Destiny. His lot was knocked down to him a bargain, and it turns out to be a take-in. His land of promise is a moving bog. His bed of roses is a high-backed chair stuffed with thorns. His laurel wreath is a garland of nettles. His honours resolve themselves into a capital hoax; his pleasures are heavy penalties; his pride is the snuff of a candle; his power, but volumes of smoke. The Editor is the most ill-starred man alive. He, and he alone; the ten thousand pretenders about town notwithstanding; is indeed the identical martyr commonly talked of as the Most Ill-used Individual. He seems to govern opinion, and is in reality a victim to the opinions of others. He incurs more than nine-tenths of the risk and responsibility, and reaps less than one-tenth of the reward and reputation. The defects of his work are liberally assigned to him; the merits of it are magnanimously imputed to his correspondents. If a bad article appear, the Editor is unsparingly condemned! if a brilliant one be inserted, "Anonymous" carries off the eulogium. The editorial function is supposed to consist "in the substi-

tution of *if it be* for *if it is*, and the insertion of the word *however* here and there, to impede the march of a fine style." Commas and colons are the points he is reputed to make; his niche of fame is merely a parenthesis; he is but a note of admiration to genius! His life is spent in ushering clever people into deserved celebrity; he sits, as charioteer, outside the vehicle, in which prodigious talents are driven to immortality. It is his fortune to insert all his contributors in the temple of glory, and to exclude himself "for want of space." He is always to "go in," but expires unpublished at last. He bestows present popularity on thousands, without securing posthumous renown as his own share. His career is in this life a tale of mystery, "to be continued in the next." He is only thought of when things go wrong in the journal. Curiosity then looks out at the corners of its eyes, and with brows and lips pursed-up, querulously ejaculates "Who *is* he?" If, by any chance, praise instead of censure should be meditated, the wrong man is immediately mentioned. People are only certain of their editor when they design to horsewhip him. Is there a bright passage or two in an indifferent article, you may be sure they are *not* indebted for their polish to the editorial pen. Is there a dull phrase or a harsh period in some favourite contribution? Oh! the editor has altered it, or neglected to revise the press! But if the editor is abused for what he inserts, he is twice-abused for what he rejects. It is a curious feature of his destiny, that if he strikes out but a single line of an article, whether in verse or prose, that very line is infallibly the crowning beauty of the production. It is not a little odd, that when he declines a paper, that paper is sure to be by far the best thing its author ever wrote. Accepted articles may be bad; rejected ones are invariably good. It is admitted that judgment is the first

essential for an editorship; and it is at the same time insisted on, that judgment is exactly the quality which the editor has not. An author is praised in a review; he is grateful to an individual writer, whose name he has industriously inquired for; an author is condemned in a review; he is unspeakably disgusted with the editor. Week after week, month after month, the said editor succours the oppressed, raises up the weak, applauds virtue, exalts talent; he pens or promulgates the praises of friends; of their books, pictures, acting, safety-lamps, and steam-paddles; but from the catalogue of golden names his own is an eternal absentee. Greater self-denial was not shown by the late Mr. Massingham of Drury-lane, who held office in the theatre for nearly forty years without once witnessing play or farce! Being solely responsible, the editor is compelled not only to review, but even to *read*, new volumes. There is another peculiarity in his condition. Of all the MSS. that come before him, it is his fate to peruse only those which will least repay the trouble. Observe: a contributor writes nonsense ten times over, the articles are returned; he sends one much better, it is inserted; a third exhibits a striking improvement; a fourth contains touches of genius; a few more papers are written and accepted, and their author has won a character for assured and established excellence of composition. *It is superfluous to read further.* Of so masterly a style, not another specimen need be perused. The editor can rely upon his contributor. His productions were read while they were worthless or indifferent, but they are now, so admirable, so full of thoughts "that give delight and hurt not," that to inspect any more such MSS. would be clearly a waste of time. May it be so with ours!

THE POLICE MAGISTRATE.

THE traveller, when he came within view of the gibbet, knew that he had entered a civilised country. The Police Magistrate is of opinion that a spacious and well-filled prison is an object of national pride. He measures the resources of a nation by the number of offences it can afford in a year; he calculates its moral greatness by the square acres covered by its gaols. That, in his eyes, is the land of liberty, where there are plenty of prisons for the accommodation of the people. He is a friend to popular rights, and contends that the subject has the same right to his gaol which the sovereign has to his palace. He can see no reason why the number of culprits should not be regularly kept up, on the plan laid down in the Army and Navy; when volunteers are scarce, a bounty might be offered. He has no objection to the project for building new churches, and admits that the new workhouses may fairly claim the approval of all who are friendly to the extension of imprisonment; but laments that there is a shameful want of public spirit with regard to the erection of new prisons. He is sure that there would be no want of offenders, if there were more gaols. He begrudges the money spent on the National Gallery at Charing-Cross, but hints that a House of Correction at the entrance to Parliament Street is much wanted. He rejoices in the reform of the Criminal Code, and would go yet further; for, as he says, to transport a man for life gives him no chance of repeating his offence, which is unfair towards the magistrate, and can only tend to depopulate our prisons. The more depraved, however, are better away; for nothing grieves him more than sending a hardened sinner to gaol. Prison discipline is too precious to be wasted on a wretch without feeling, on one who only

corrupts the morals of the innocent prisoners, and teaches them not to mind picking oakum. He holds that man to be unworthy of the tread-mill, who seeks to lessen the misery of his fellow-prisoners. Those whom he has the greatest satisfaction in committing are the roving rogues, who, although they know they are without food, are not ashamed of having an appetite that many a magistrate would be proud of when he goes home to dinner. The wicked wanderers who own to being houseless, and are nevertheless convicted of sleeping in the open air—perhaps of singing in the day-time—these he commits *con amore;* and often does his heart ache at the reflection that imperious custom and vulgar prejudice prevent him from awarding more than a fortnight's imprisonment. But he never repairs to his club to dine, or visits the theatre in the evening, with so heavy a heart as when, by a series of unlucky accidents, his morning has been devoted to examinations that have ended in nothing—in the discharge of the prisoners; when, after a fierce contest, he has failed to return a single member to the House of Correction. On such occasions (they are rare) he exclaims, with a bitterness never felt by the old Roman, "I have lost a day!" These misfortunes will happen to the best of magistrates; and they are chiefly attributable to the indulgence shown to the accused in the production of evidence to substantiate their innocence. A man who would prove himself not guilty can have little respect for the bench; no sympathy with the feelings of the magistrate, who is obliged to release him. It is questionable whether, in such cases, the complainant might not be committed instead: for surely magistrates should not sit for nothing? Prisoners, however, of a certain station in life, may be acquitted without violence to his feelings. If Sarah Jenkins,

charged with shoplifting, be fashionably attired, and in affluent circumstances, she is addressed as Mrs. Jenkins, and accommodated with a chair and a glass of water. The magistrate laments that an investigation should be called for, and casts a furtive glance to his private room. The witnesses are in this case persons whose testimony must be received with exceeding caution. They have something suspicious in their aspects; while the prisoner at the bar, or rather the "party accused," looks so very respectable. At every serious turn of the disclosure, he ejaculates, "The party is so respectable; it 's a pity!"

But there is one class of persons whom he particularly holds up for the reprobation of mankind; the people who don't come forward to prosecute. This he regards as a moral offence of the blackest dye: nothing provokes him so much. Trial by jury is so excellent an institution that it ought to be encouraged. The prisoner, he assumes, has faithfully done *his* duty; and shame be on the prosecutor who neglects his own.

THE BORROWER.

THE borrower, with admirable consistency of character, borrows his motto from Shakspeare, "Base is the slave who pays!" He understands the meaning of the verb "to give," as in the case of a political subscription or a charitable donation, of which lists are published in the papers. Generous people give; poor-spirited people pay. He looks upon himself as a professor of the most ancient and noble art extant, the art of borrowing. He is proud to call himself an Englishman, because the said art has here been cultivated beyond any other. In modern times, more especially, it has been brought

almost to perfection; and has been so closely studied and so fondly cherished by statesmen and economists, that it may justly lay claim to be distinguished as the great national art. Mr. Pitt is, of course, his *beau-ideal* of a minister; and he holds Britannia to be the envy of surrounding nations by virtue of her having been able to get her acceptances discounted to the extent of eight hundred millions. He thinks it the duty of every subject living under such a state to follow the state's example; and as he preaches, so he practises.

By the art of borrowing, he of course means borrowing money. All other loans he despises except in cases of extremity, as misapplications of great powers, and as tending to bring a great principle into a familiarity which breeds contempt. To be sure, the man who borrows ready-made articles is no fool, but he is a small dealer, and generally disgraces the art. What can he promise himself? What does he attain to? He can seldom get beyond a set of books, an umbrella, or a great-coat: this is poor work, and renders borrowing a bore to both parties. The highest achievement in this department is a horse and gig; and what can you do with it when you have got it? A borrower cannot afford to injure his credit by driving anything so suspicious as a gig; and to sell a borrowed one for even twice as much as it is worth is an offence against the laws: a borrower of this stamp can hardly pretend to more sagacity than a lender. Borrowing a house, ready furnished, of course, for the season, or a sailing-boat for a month, may be a more respectable course, and it occasionally receives high sanction; but in the end both the villa and the vessel must be delivered back to the right owners (as the phrase is), which, to a borrower of the smallest susceptibility of feeling, is always unpleasant.

Money alone, the sure means of purchasing pleasures of any pattern; the medium for the exercise of our own free will; the power of defying the world;

> "The glorious privilege
> Of being independent;"

this alone is worthy the great soul, the proud purpose, the noble ambition of the enlightened borrower; he should, as Cobbett used to say, "get gold and keep it." He will take good care, at all events, if he have the least pretensions to honour, never to pay it back.

We have already intimated that to pay back money is inconsistent with the principle of borrowing; but a different doctrine, we are aware, has been craftily broached in some quarters, and a different practice in some cases prevails. Borrowers of some credit and character are now and then known to create much disappointment by actually returning the money, by observing their "promise to pay" to the letter, and thereby violating the spirit of it. This occurs in cases where, a small sum having been lent, there is thought to be no chance of extorting the loan of a large one but by the repayment of the trifle. Convenient as the plan may be, and at first sight it seems defensible enough, it is in point of fact tampering with an essential principle. It is a descent from the high to the middle ground; it countenances the fatal doctrine of expediency, and compromises an intrinsic right.

The high-minded borrower is proof against the plausibility of this practice. He is not of opinion that the end justifies the means. He never can be persuaded, under any circumstances whatever, to violate the first rule of his art. All that he ever hazards doing in this way, is to write to you to advance him a good round sum, requesting that you will deduct what he owes you

from the amount. His maxim is the earliest flush of youth; at the dawn of life, when the mind, conscious of its purity, yet sensible of its frailty, looks out into the great world of morals, and takes to itself some settled line by which its true guidance may be ensured, and its youthful rectitude preserved; even then, ere yet he had ventured into the moneyed world, or whispered for the first time his want of a loan; his maxim was, "No money to be returned." What was adopted by the enthusiasm of youth shall be adhered to by the experience of age. No sophistry, no tenet of expediency, no suggestion of convenience ever succeeds in inducing him to pay back the money he has borrowed: he would as soon think of turning lender. He gets his gold by fair play, and he keeps it upon a defined principle. He acts upon an upright and very simple system, that of never taking a denial; he asks, and asks for ever, but is always accommodating; he wants seventy pounds, but he will put up with fifteen, and take your bill for the rest; or he will call to-morrow, or on Friday, for the balance. He is not particular about guineas; make it pounds, and he will cheerfully allow the shillings as discount. If you regret that you cannot accommodate him on the instant, he merely inquires when you can; next week will do for him. If you cannot possibly name a time and see no likelihood, then he can but drop in and take his chance; and, in the meantime, you will just be so good as to give him a note of introduction to Mr. Loosecash, your agent in Lothbury.

Such is his urbanity that you cannot offend him; you are "not at home" to him three times a-day for a whole week, but on the eighth morning he meets you coming out, and presses your hand with as much fervour as if it had just written him a cheque. His disinterestedness is equally conspicuous; give him your acceptance for a

hundred, and you may have his for a thousand at what date you will. He is the first to rejoice at the repeal of the usury-laws, because he can now offer you your own terms; one rate of per centage is the same thing to him as another. And let it not be insinuated to his dispraise that he was ever known to break faith with you. His frank and emphatic "Of course" in reply to your doubtful, drawling "May I depend upon you?" means just what it says. If you cannot depend upon the man who never means to pay, where can you rest dependance? Would you rely on him who is trusting to a mere endeavour, to that rope of sand, a good intention? on one who will certainly pay you if he *can!* No, here there can be no dependance. But on him who, like the sentimental traveller, is predetermined not to give you a single sous, you may rest an unhesitating reliance. A resolution to pay is scratched on glass, a determination not to pay is cut in marble.

The Borrower is a vehement advocate for the strict administration of all laws conservative of property. He is a deadly enemy to the swindler. His soul sickens at the sight of a pickpocket. Even forgery, though more genteel, he denounces as infamously unfair. All these pursuits, he contends, militate against the successful practice of borrowing, and all might be more profitably and peaceably carried on upon the principles of that art. He insists that in a free country no man should be plundered without his consent, but that at the same time every man has a right to be robbed if he likes. He is arbitrary in his judgments upon vagrants and other riff-raff; he has no pity for the poor: fellows who pay their way while they can, and when they can't, take to stealing; who know nothing of the golden mean; who have probably "frittered their money away in paying their debts," when, by spending it rationally, they might

always have borrowed in an honourable independence. Yet it is curious that these two negatives, the beggar and the thief, make up that grand affirmative, the Borrower. It is simply so. How weak the elements that compose this strong and subtle spirit! Anybody can beg, anybody can steal; but to unite the two—to BORROW, requires profound genius.

Now the world, as we daily see, is full of profound genius.

THE MAN WHO BELONGS TO NO PARTY.

THIS gentleman is the living personification of the Malaprop Cerberus; three gentlemen at once. He is Tory, Whig, and Radical, and belongs to neither party. In his excess of impartiality he joins all three, and discards them in turn. The three goddesses are continually contending on the little Mount Ida of his imagination, and each wins the prize once a-day. At breakfast Sir Robert Peel is unanswerable; by dinner-time, Lord John has stammered out something convincing; and with the third bottle, O'Connell reels in, to the air of "See the conquering hero comes." He is a more exquisite monster than that of the enchanted island, for he has three voices; and if he had three votes would give one to each party, to preserve the balance, and prove his independence.

His is a comfortable creed, for it entirely excludes the workings of that antiquated inconvenience called a conscience. The man who belongs to no party can support each in succession, without damage to his character. Deviate as he may from the direct path, he cannot forfeit his consistency. It is his privilege, and his only, to take that course upon every occasion which his inclinations or his interests point out. He it is

who can, with perfect impunity, with no possibility of impeachment, allow fair play to be the first law of nature, that of self-preservation. He is bound by no principle but that which is comprised in the duty of "taking care of yourself." That he considers to be the Whole Duty of Man. Teach us that, he thinks, and you have taught us all. If every subject would but fulfil that duty, if every individual only knew how to "take care of himself," the doctrine of perfectibility would be no longer a dream, and the Millennium no longer moonshine.

It is one of his maxims, that the man who is indifferent to his own interests can have no concern about those of other people. If he be unmindful of himself, how can he be thinking of his fellow-creatures? And yet, he remarks, nothing is more common than to hear self-sacrifices lauded. People not only neglect their duty towards themselves and abandon the very interests they are most bound to guard; but afterwards they walk abroad into the public streets and proclaim what they have done; as though there were nothing criminal, but something glorious, in inflicting injury upon a human being. Nay, so strong is this delusion, that the very people (and this indeed is curious) the very people who are prone to take care of themselves, are generally the first to boast their self-sacrifices. The innocent absolutely stand self-accused, and beg to be condemned, quite glad to be even suspected of the very folly they would be ashamed to commit.

Amongst these you will not find the "Man of no Party." He is a gentleman of too much decision of character; too upright and too downright. According to his creed, that man is the true patriot who never misses an opportunity of serving himself; he alone is the real lover of his country who constantly devotes his

mind, through good and ill report, to the prosperous working out of his own individual ends.

Although these ends may be often attained by an obstinate attachment to a particular party, and the shallow think this the certain way; they are only to be effectually accomplished through the medium of a delicate independence of all parties, and this the cunning know. Independence is nothing more than a sense of dependence suppressed; as contentment is the art of hiding your desires, or as innocence is guilt undetected. The man of no party, then, is independent, because he contrives to conceal the fact that all parties are essential to him. Concealing that, he becomes essential to all parties.

Now suppose him to make choice of one; directly he does so, he ceases to be of consequence. He is a convert to the right creed, and is never heard of afterwards. A party cannot afford to reward a friend whose suffrages it is sure of for nothing. It is throwing a good thing away to bestow it where it has been earned; favours in the political world should be employed to bribe, and not to recompense. He is a party-man, and must look for his reward in the triumph of his cause. With his party he must vote, right or wrong; that is, for or against his own interests, being equally sure of receiving no indemnification from the other side. He has made up his mind, and he may die a beggar when he likes. His opinions are known, his vote certain; there is an end of him.

But look at him as he is, a Man of no Party; joining either of the three when it suits him, bound fast to none, an object of desire to all:

> "What more felicity can fall to creature
> Than to enjoy delight with liberty?"

He is a creature who has both; whose movements are

matters of importance, whose intentions are universally speculated upon. Everybody is curious about *his* opinion on the subject, because it is only to be guessed at; everybody wants to know what *he* thinks, because he has not made up his mind; everybody conceives *his* vote to be of consequence, because they wonder on which side it will be given. Each party fancies him its own, and "the eyes of Europe are upon him." Meantime he saunters from side to side, prying into everything and looking out for the shortest and surest path to his own advantage:

> "There he arriving round about doth flie,
> And takes survey with busie, curious eye,
> Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly—"

deciding at last according to his sovereign will and pleasure. He has no predilections, no prejudices; he is bound to no pledge, trammelled by no party; he is himself alone, and is like no brother; he can do what he likes with his own opinion and his own vote; the minister going out and the minister coming in are the same to him; he is a free-born, independent Englishman, who proves his anxiety for others by taking care of himself, and his good wishes for the interests of his country by assiduously promoting his own.

THE ANTI-PUNSTER.

THE man who would scruple to make a pun would not hesitate to commit a burglary. Why we think so, we don't know; but we have just as much right to our opinion that there is a direct connection between a dislike of puns and a taste for burglaries, as Dr. Johnson had to his, when he chose, most arbitrarily and alliteratively, to confound a pun perpetrated with a pocket to be picked.

The anti-punster is the incarnation of the spirit of intolerance. His aversion knows no cold medium. He has no mercy for the man who differs from him, on the point of a pun. He is a man of one idea, and that, though an odd one certainly, is no joke. His singleness of apprehension cannot stand the shock of a double-meaning. One is as much as he can manage to comprehend; and he can no more stand up against the force and confusion of two, than he could brave the discharge of a double-barrelled gun at his head. Besides, he regards a pun as a most reckless and extravagant waste of meaning. He would rather you used a word that meant nothing. "True no-meaning" does not puzzle *him* more than wit; and a passage that leads to nothing, affords him more profit and recreation than an insane attempt to walk in two paths at a time,

> "Like to a man on double business bound,
> Who both neglects."

He would infinitely prefer a stroll in the dark through grounds beset with traps and spring-guns, to joining in conversation with a punster. He resents an unprovoked quibble as a personal insult. He never called anybody out on this score, because, in his opinion, a man once convicted of a premeditated pun has forfeited all claim to be treated as a gentleman; but he never fails to kick the offender down-stairs, with his mind's foot. Horatio, having discovered that his eldest son had called the cock an ornithological Cerberus—three birds at once, his throat being a swallow, and his voice a crow—threatened to cut the culprit off with a shilling; and ascertaining that the young wag had remarked upon the difficulty of "cutting off" a son with a shilling, a shilling being undeniably "blunt," he put his threat into execution. He sneers at Shakspeare as an inspired

idiot; and condemns as vicious, not only in taste but in morals, the final exit of Mercutio, who is sent into purgatory with a pun in his mouth. You increase his disgust if you tell him that the same thing has happened on the real stage of life; that Elliston's ending was even as that of Mercutio, whom he had so often represented; that when, an hour or two before the parting of soul and body, the patient's head was raised on his pillow, and, to induce him into one more hopeless spoonful of medicine, he was told that "he should wash it down with half a glass of his brown sherry;" that even then the actor's glazed eye brightened under the influence of the ruling passion, as he articulated with almost moveless lips, "Bri-be-ry—and—Cor-rup-tion!"

Nothing incenses the anti-punster so much as detecting in a distaste for puns an incapacity for making them. Charge him with that, and he will immediately prove himself incapable by offering proof of capacity. He can neither make a genuine good pun, which is a good thing; nor a shocking bad one, which is a better. Whatever he hazards is bad, to be sure; but not bad enough: it is a wretched, dull piece of impotence, wholly innocent of drollery. He has no soul for a villanous quibble; he cannot for his life make it vile enough to succeed; he has not the grasp of mind requisite to gather up two remote meanings, and compress them into a single word, which the eye rather than the tongue italicises to the apprehension. In short, he is unconscious that the excellent and the execrable meet together upon a point which genius alone can reach; and that in the art of punning, to be good enough and bad enough are the same thing, the difficulty being as great, and the glory as unequivocal. In his attempt, therefore, he tries hard at working out a good one, and consequently fails to arrive at the

proper pitch of badness. The anti-punster is an incapable; all he can do is, to take his hat because he can't take a joke. He breaks up a party, because somebody breaks a jest. He thinks he shows his sense by not relishing nonsense; and seeks credit for profound thought, by abhorring a play upon words. He carries a sneer on his lip for want of a smile.

THE PENNY-A-LINER.

THE penny-a-liner, like Pope, is "known by his style." His fine Roman hand once seen may be sworn to by the most cursory observer. But though in this one respect of identity resembling Pope, he bears not in any other the least likeness to author dead or living. He has no brother, and is like no brother, in literature. Such as he was, he is. He disdains to accommodate his manner to the ever-altering taste of the times. He refuses to bow down to the popular idol, innovation. He has a style, and he sticks to it. He scorns to depart from it, to gratify the thirst for novelty. He even thinks that it improves with use, and that his pet-phrases acquire a finer point and additional emphasis upon every fresh application. Thus, in relating the last fashionable occurrence, how a noble family has been plunged into consternation and sorrow by the elopement of Lady Prudentia a month after marriage, he informs you, as though the phrase itself carried conviction to the heart, that the "feelings of the injured husband may be more easily conceived than described." If he requires that phrase twice in the same narrative, he consents to vary it by saying that "they may be imagined but cannot be depicted." In reporting an incident illustrative of the fatal effects of taking prussic

acid, he states that the "vital spark is extinct," and that not the smallest hopes are entertained of the unfortunate gentleman's recovery. A lady's bag is barbarously stolen from her arm by "a monster in the human form." A thunder-storm is described as having "visited" the metropolis, and the memory of the oldest inhabitant furnishes no parallel to the ravages of the "electric fluid." A new actress "surpasses the most sanguine expectations" of the public, and exhibits talents "that have seldom been equalled, never excelled." A new book is not simply published, it "emanates from the press." On the demise of a person of eminence, it is confidently averred that he had a hand "open as day to melting charity," and that "take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again." Two objects not immediately connected are sure to be "far as the poles asunder;" although they are very easily brought together and reconciled in the reader's mind by the convenience of the phrase "as it were," which is an especial favourite, and constantly in request. He is a great admirer of amplitude of title, for palpable reasons; as when he reports, that "Yesterday the Right Honourable Lord John Russell, M.P., his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, dined with," &c. He is wonderfully expert in the measurement of hailstones, and in the calculation of the number of panes of glass which they demolish in their descent. He is acquainted with the exact circumference of every gooseberry that emulates the plenitude of a pumpkin; and can at all times detect a phenomenon in every private family, by simply reckoning up the united ages of its various members. But in the discharge of these useful duties, for the edification and amusement of the public, he employs, in the general course of things, but one set of phrases. If a

fire can be rendered more picturesque by designating it the "devouring element," the devouring element rages in the description to the end of the chapter. Once a hit always a hit; a good thing remains good for ever; a happy epithet is felicitous to the last. The only variation of style that he can be prevailed upon to attempt, he introduces in his quotations. To these he often gives an entirely new aspect, and occasionally, by accident, he improves upon the originals. Of this, the following may stand as a specimen:

> "'Tis not in mortals to *deserve* success;
> But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll *command* it."

THE CREDITOR.

It has been remarked by a living writer, a moralist as well as a wit, that it is most absurdly the custom among all ranks to designate the debtor, the "poor debtor," and the "unfortunate debtor;" while, by equally general consent, the creditor is styled the "grasping," the "hard-hearted," and the "relentless." We gratefully pay in an instalment to the stock of proof, that the creditor is herein infamously libelled whether the debtor be rightfully designated or not.

We have seen many creditors; we have met them often in life, by accident; seldom by appointment, for appointments with creditors are rarely kept. And of them all, without exception, we can honestly declare that they were fellows truly worthy of giving credit; kind, sensible, polite souls, whose books it was quite a pleasure to remain in. It is really a pity to pay such people; you deprive them thereby of so many opportunities of showing their excellent qualities, and their continued claims upon your custom. Payment can

only be completely justified by being coupled with a condition that you immediately run a much larger score, and take longer time. To offer them ready money is to narrow their chances of doing that which they were expressly sent into the world to do.

Such creditors have we seen, and few of any other class. Now and then you *may* find a "a hard-hearted creditor," one whom a long course of prosperity has petrified; whom singular good fortune in collecting his debts easily has rendered impatient to the exception; you *may* stumble occasionally on a "relentless" creditor, one who would rather receive a small part of his account than fifty excuses, who has no taste for ingenious evasions, who actually expects you not merely to make a promise, but to keep it; who stupidly supposes that you are to pay him because the money is due, and who then proceeds to what he calls proceedings against you. But, depend upon it, if you ever come into collision with such a burlesque of a man of business, you will find him young in trade, inexperienced in the art of dunning, and unused to giving credit. He knows nothing of the duties of a creditor, and your best plan will be to pay him at once, and have done with him; getting his receipt, and having it framed and glazed, unless you like to keep out of his way until he gets more versed in his calling, and sees the absurdity of his applications.

But out of the way of the creditor who knows himself, and who deserves the distinction of having a round of debtors, you never can have occasion to get. Never avoid him if you wish to spare him the trouble of writing a receipt. Perhaps you, like Romeo—

> "—— do remember an apothecary,
> And hereabout he dwells."

But is that a reason why you should skulk past his

door on the other side of the way, or dive down a turning to evade him, instead of nodding at him as you pass, as though you knew his worth and put trust in him as an honest fellow? If you see your creditor at a distance, walk boldly up to him, and as you go by, hope his rheumatism is better; if he be about to stop you, seem to stop him, and, before he can remind you that you faithfully promised to pay him three weeks ago, hint to him that he has neglected sending in your account, and that you *must* have it by the twenty-fifth of next month. Tell him to call for the amount on that day. You need not be not at home, for he won't come. We have said that appointments with creditors are seldom kept; it is the fault, we do not hesitate to say so, it is the fault of the creditor, he thinks it hardly worth while to attend. Some years ago punctuality was exceedingly prevalent amongst all classes of duns; they knocked as the clock struck; you were sure of their visit if they promised to call. But the system has changed with the times; and you may now desire your tailor to call at twelve on Tuesday, with a perfect reliance on his non-attendance, unless you want, not to diminish, but to lengthen his account, by another order. People used to feel quite happy when they discovered a creditor who was content with calling once a day; a patient, civil creature, who was satisfied with knocking till he was tired; a fine fellow of the come-again school: but now, in such a case, your thoughts would recur to a horsewhip, or the police; the most moderate course you could take would be to address a letter of complaint to the "Morning Herald."

Lest it should be thought by somebody who has happened to meet with a hard-hearted suitor once in his life, that compassionate creditors are scarce, we shall establish the existence of this class, by introducing a

specimen of a set still further removed from the "grasping" and "relentless" few. Our specimen is the most diffident and gentle-minded creature living; he is therefore marked out for a creditor; and he *is* one, in fifty places which he scrupulously avoids. He takes a thousand times more pains to get out of the way of a debtor, than some people foolishly take to escape the glance of a creditor. He would not meet a man who owes him money for the world, lest it should be voluntarily tendered, or he should be supposed capable of asking for it. Twice only has he been wrought upon to do this; we played the lever in both cases. In the first, knowing his timid and irresolute character, we urged him to apply for payment of a considerable sum which had been long due, and only wanted asking for. To call would be better than to write, but he would write. One morning he astonished us by a specific and decided announcement; we could hardly believe him; "Well, I've written to Tomlinson." He received in return thousands of compliments and congratulations on his nerve and resolution; he had done wonders, and the thing seemed settled. But three weeks after this, we were again startled by the same announcement—"Well, I've written to Tomlinson!" "Written! Why you said you had written three weeks ago." "Yes," was the explanation, "Yes, I know, and so I did, *but I didn't send the letter!*" To write that letter was a giant effort; to put it into the post required three weeks' thought, self-communion, composure, and deliberation.

Pen and ink applications were evidently hopeless. He must be screwed up, for once at any rate, to a personal visit; and on another debtor of his, one not likely to pay unsolicited, we boldly determined he should *call*; yes, actually knock at the door, enter the family

apartment, and ask for his money. Well, he *would* call, next week. No, he must resolve on going at once. Well, he *would* go, the next day, or the day after. No, he must start that very morning, nay, that very moment. His hat and gloves were brought, and go he must. "By heavens!" he muttered, as he felt his resolution forming under the influence of a will not his own, and his limbs obeying the impulse of a mind quite made up, but not belonging to him, "by heavens, B——, you're a fiend!" But he *was* moved slowly forward; coaxed one half of the way, and dragged the other half. Still he *did* go on. The point of destination is in sight; yes, that is the street; but to get him to turn down it is a task exquisitely delicate, and difficult exceedingly. Compared with him, a pig is the most tractable of creatures. At last, however, the corner is turned, the house is before us, and with a step the most faltering and reluctant he advances towards that "debtor's door," as though a rope were round his neck and eternity awaited him on the threshold. Fifty excuses are offered and rejected, fifty reasons why writing would be better. He will pledge himself to despatch a letter before he dines, he will be quite peremptory in his tone, and absolutely request payment whenever it may be perfectly convenient. But he is not to be so let off, when on the very verge of the door-step. One effort more and his foot is upon it. We relieve him from the task of knocking; a loud rap shakes his soul, and he feels as though his fetters are being knocked off, that his time has come. Conscious that he cannot now escape, we leave him to his fate, and retire to a print-shop window a little way off, to wait the issue of his first "stand and deliver" to a debtor. Short was the interval allowed us for speculation upon the result. We turned round to see that he had safely entered, and perceived

him just descending the steps with a face lit up with satisfaction and a sense of having discharged his duty. Another moment, and down the street he came with elasticity in his tread, and pleasure in the very palms of his hands as he rubbed them together. What could this portend? "It's all right," he cried, as he approached. All right? Could he have asked for the three hundred pounds, and received the sum, or even a promise, in that brief space of time? it could not be possible. "It's all right," he repeated. "What's all right? Have you got the money?" "No," exclaimed the happy, the more, oh! far more than contented, creditor, "it's all right, *he's out of town!*"

Sceptical reader, there is even such a creditor as this in the world; and millions of others, we doubt not, worthy of associating with him, people this world of trust. Before you revile the creditor, and defame him as hard-hearted, think upon what you owe him, how long it has been due, how much he may want it, and how seldom he has asked. Look around you, and say if you do not see among your acquaintances many in whom the repugnance to ask for what is due to them is almost unconquerable; who could almost beg, who have been known to borrow, rather than assume the mean, cold character of a dun. The unwilling to ask is quite as numerous a class as the unwilling to pay. Inquire of that man who traces what he calls his irretrievable ruin to the obstinate folly or the revengeful persecution of his creditors, whether the mischief did not originate in the spite or stupidity of one, and whether he had not experienced lenity and good-nature from the rest. The creditor is an injured angel, let ingratitude *per-contra* the account as it may. The three grand virtues are his in turn; he commences in faith; that gone, he rests long in hope; and that departed, he is

content to have been a dispenser of charity. His life is spent in paying compliments to human nature, that pays not him in return. He gives his fellow-creatures credit for honesty; let them give him credit — for generosity.

THE MAN WHO IS ALWAYS CONSISTENT.

"PARALLEL," said the dying Mr. Placid to his only son, "in your dealings with the crooked and deviating world, be upright and straight-forward. Take your course, and keep it. Be just to others, be true to yourself; you will then be consistent. Men will call you by all sorts of names, but never let them call you the man who has no consistency."

And Parallel Placid (junior now no longer) went quietly upon the high-road of life, determined to be consistent.

He had one idea: it was only one numerically, but in moral value, it was a thousand. Up or down, rain or shine, right or left, north or south, he would be true to his point. His conduct should be marked by undeviating consistency.

Consistency would be a glorious thing, if what is consistent in one place were consistent in another; at one time, were consistent at another; in one person, were consistent in another. But consistency is considerably less comfortable and wise-looking, when it wraps around it in July the furs which were so welcome in January; or shivers at Christmas in the lace and muslin it fluttered in at Midsummer.

But the conduct of young Placid was to be marked with undeviating consistency.

"What is so simple!" said Parallel to himself, as

he walked eagerly forward against a post that stood before him; "consistency is attainable by everybody. What so safe, so agreeable! It is but to go straight on," he continued, striking his ankle against an iron-railing that projected into the path; "and having once taken the precaution to select the right course, how is it possible to go—"

But here Parallel was stopped at the very edge of a broad, deep ditch, into which he had nearly plumped, being ignorant that it crossed the road, and cut off all possibility of further progress in that direction.

It needs scarcely to be said, in the first instance, that the man of undeviating consistency is essentially a hero of matter-of-fact. Everything that is not mathematically correct, is to him inconsistent. When I told Parallel the other day, that a man whom I had met in Shropshire, a descendant of the giants, was of a height and bulk so enormous, that it took me ten minutes to ask him how he did; he said the occurrence was inconsistent, for the question ought not to have occupied one instant more than the same inquiry addressed to a dwarf. And when we mentioned that on the railway we had shared a common danger, "being all in the same boat," he pronounced it to be highly inconsistent to travel in boats upon railways.

The consistency of Parallel is systematic and unimpeachable: it begins with the beginning. First for his thoughts. He is consistent from thoughts to words. What he thinks he must say. He believes that he forms an opinion, and thinks that he conceives an idea; then out it must come. The opinion is not only unasked, but unwanted; it is probably erroneous, and certainly ill-timed; but the suppression of it would seem to him grossly inconsistent. Nobody wants to know what he thinks and feels; but that is unimportant; he

speaks out, because he is convinced that the man who has thoughts and feelings, and does not talk about them, can have no consistency.

Then, for his words. He is consistent from words to acts. What he says, that he must do. Observe most particularly that he takes care generally to say nothing to his own personal cost or inconvenience; but even should it happen so, the thing said is the thing done. Having declared in the morning that he meant to walk home, seventeen miles on a bad road, at night, he would consider it an inconsistency to ride, although the rain has come down soakingly and suddenly, and a conveyance is unexpectedly on the spot.

Then, for his acts. Here he is equally consistent; from act to act. What he has once done, that is the thing he must do again; or where would be his consistency! The road, whether the best or not, must be taken now, because it was taken before. Nine may not be the right number exactly, but it is the figure chosen, for the reason that it stands next to eight, and ten would be consequently inconsistent.

From thoughts to words, from words to acts, and from acts to a repetition of them, Parallel's practice is easily traced; and at this point we find him consistent in a thousand respects besides. Thus he is consistent from a beginning to an end. Parallel, having once commenced, goes on to the legitimate close. Having advanced to the middle of the proposed work, he finds, perhaps, that he is wrong; that it is all a failure; but this is a discovery that never induces him to stop, for how inconsistent it must appear to finish before the conclusion, and come to an end in the middle! He moves forward therefore to the completion, conscious of error indeed, but in perfect consistency with his commencement.

As he goes abroad into social life, you may follow him in his relations with mankind, and detect more consistency everywhere. Thus, however others may change, he is the same in his bearing to them all. The scrub of a lad whom he called Mike when he wanted his boots polished, he still calls Mike, when the scrub of a lad is known amongst his fellow-peers as Lord Japan. He is no enemy to courtesy; far from it; but he prizes consistency above everything, and smacks his independent lips as he salutes a noble by the ancient name of "Mike."

The acquaintance, however, who happens to have descended in exact proportion to the elevation of Mike, dropping down from the peerage to boot-polishing, does not always command the exercise of a like virtue. To him, in his changes, Parallel cannot be the same; for he proves that the man's conduct in life has been so utterly inconsistent, that no rule of consistency will precisely apply to it. But upon some points he even here contrives to adhere to his principle.

"I can do nothing for him, sir. Not a shoe can he ever shine for me. He never blacked for me when a peer; how can I consistently employ him in his present condition? In former days, he never wanted a shilling of me; could I give him one now, or at any time hereafter, without inconsistency?"

As thus he reasons in the case of one, he would reason in the case of many; and indeed the rule of consistency laid down by Parallel, always extends from an individual to a whole family. If he is to set foot in a circle, he must go all round it, and be at home everywhere. It would be quite inconsistent to be known to you, and not to know your friends. He must of course become acquainted with your relations and companions; with the country ones, as they come successively to

town. All that is consistent. Or he is ready, if you like, and have any rustic connections to lodge him with, to take a trip with you out of the smoke, when London smoke is not consistent with his comforts.

Numerous are the Parallels running (not very consistently) in all directions about the social world; whose principle it is, from one link of acquaintance to forge many.

"So, you know that family, do you? I must get you to introduce me."

"Now is it not odd rather, that I should never have heard before of your intimacy with the commissioner, so much as I have desired an introduction!"

"Ha!—well—yes—God bless me! and you visit often at the lodge! only think. We'll go up there together some morning or other; say to-morrow!"

These men of consistency carry the principle rather far, when they thus lay it down as a law that a friend's friends should be one's own friends; but the practice is a thousand times worse when it embraces friend's wives as well. Now Parallel, be it known, is upon this point of his system most positive and fixed. It is one of his favourite tenets, that between married people there can be no single friendships; but that friendship necessarily includes man and wife. His maxim is, that a wife's proper place is to be at her husband's side, and that in every new intimacy he may form, she should be, in her sphere, participant. His friend's wife must therefore be in heart and soul the friend of Mrs. Placid. If A. and B. take a fancy to each other, Y. and Z. must swear eternal constancy.

Show to the consistent man his glaring inconsistency. Explain to him that two rational men may easily conceive and cherish for one another the purest regard; in opinions and sympathies they may be one, in pursuits

and habits allied, in tastes and dispositions all that is congenial; their companionship productive of nothing but pleasure, mutual service, and mutual entertainment. But does it follow as a consequence, ask him, that the introduction of wife to wife would be the prelude of a similar delightful intercourse? That their natures would at once assimilate, and their souls become knit together, in compliment to the confraternity of their lords; or that Mrs. Parallel Placid would rush to meet her dear new friend's embrace with any feeling short of that sweet and genial confidence which one crocodile reposes in another!

Parallel will, however, insist in reply, that the introduction is imperatively demanded by every rule of consistency, and that nothing can be more consistent than a friendly attachment between wives whose husbands are similarly united.

"Crony cut me, to be sure, after years of intimacy, because my wife, becoming wonderfully friendly with Mrs. Crony, happened to speak of her as she richly deserved; and we also broke up our old established acquaintance with the Doubleshuffles, because that woman, bound always in the closest ties of affection to Mrs. Placid, could never by any chance give her a good word. But what of that! What does it matter so long as the intercourse terminates consistently!"

Think, Parallel, if thought be not utterly inconsistent, think of the infinite friendships sacrificed to your principle. Think of the radiant prospects obscured, the towering hopes struck down. Think of the visions of lasting amity, the glowing pictures of never-ending sympathy and companionship, the anticipations of conviviality in the careless time, and of succour in the sorrowful hour; of the promise attending mutual endeavours and aspirations, struggling side by side, and

perhaps together achieving success in an after day; think of that one only dream of early friendship in which the inexperienced heart is all confidence, and rainbows seem to have acquired an astonishing solidity and permanence, and the gayest-coloured bubbles never break in the grasp, and the hard stone pavement springs like grass under the feet, while rascally "flesh and blood," blushing for their past tricks, appear to be the most honest and uncorrupted pair imaginable, and "body and soul," both content, carry on their partnership without wrangling! Think, man, of these rapturous images, all conceivable by the sentiment of an inspired friendship, and familiar to its passionate eyes; and then vainly attempt to calculate how many crystal chalices have been dashed from the lip, how many of those rosy dreams have been dispersed; by what?

By a mere breath: the mingled breath of two fond wives, hitherto only nodding acquaintances, but at length eager, like their husbands, for the ecstasies of friendship: and now met together by appointment, over their first uninebriating cup of gunpowder, to lay the foundation of a perpetual alliance, and to love one another, oh, *immensely!*

To those who may like the pursuit of friendship under difficulties, these Parallel amities, and right lines of sympathetic communion, must prove eminently convenient; husband shaking hands with husband, and wife embracing wife; the sons and daughters, on both sides, all evincing an uncontrollable reciprocity of devotion, according to their ages.

But, following Mr. Placid, as is our purpose, from this point, we trace him into the path political. Here we find the hero of consistency, admirably, nay, exquisitely consistent! The one maxim with which he started was this; that the wisest, greatest, and most

virtuous expedient ever devised for the service and security of the state is, an Opposition! Upon Opposition he looked, not as a necessary evil, or a disguised good, an accelerator, or a drag-chain, as the case may be; but as a glorious institution, a mighty pillar, and a grand bulwark; to be consistently maintained in the best as in the worst of times. His advice to a minister would have been, "First, catch your opposition." Of course, therefore, Parallel went at once into opposition; but "moderate opposition;" all extremes are inconsistent. With the party so regulated, and of course against the administration, he invariably voted; he joined no scattered sections of the opposing body on any occasion, however excellent their cause; but sat in the centre of the fixed and formidable row opposite the Treasury bench, and ten times a night moved off in the division against government with unvarying fidelity.

But when this had been done once too often for the minister, and the defeated captain of a cabinet gave place to the hero of opposition, Parallel, as a man of consistency, steadily supporting his party, and pledged to the principles they upheld, naturally (so you think) crossed the house, took his seat on the other side, and gave all his votes with the same unvarying fidelity to his new leader, the premier, who, for his part, had already settled Parallel high up on his bench of unflinching adherents, and entered him upon the thick-and-thin list.

What a mistake! Parallel never shifts at all. He, the consistent man, just to others, and true to himself, scorns to cross the house. He seeks no right-hand seat, but may be seen sitting as before to the left of the Speaker's chair.

Well, some people have odd predilections for particular seats, and he amongst them has a whimsical liking

for his old pet place. Not he, he has no such preference; a Treasury bench would suit him as well. Then he has sunk into the degraded office of a spy and eavesdropper in an adversary's quarters. Not he; he does not esteem himself to be in the enemy's camp at all.

But surely he comes from amongst them all, and faithful to his principles, now developed in governmental forms, votes in the division with his ministerial leader! No, all that is quite wrong. Parallel sits where he sat before, and votes as he voted. In other words, he is a member of Opposition, and in "moderate opposition" divides, as he ever divided.

"Inconsistency!" he exclaimed, in answer to charges which will get abroad in whispers upon these occasions; "what! in retaining the very seat always so appropriated; in refusing to shift when hundreds change; in voting against the minister as I have ever voted! This house I entered as a member of Opposition: I shall remain in no other character. Enemies I must expect, but the sharpest of them shall never prove me guilty of inconsistency."

Parallel is clearly of opinion, formed upon experience, that although the executive duties of an administration in its several departments, are of importance, and require to be discharged, its legislative and parliamentary functions are of the slightest possible moment, compared with the vast concerns and interests of opposition.

"Let the ministry go on saving the country, but let the country (he argues) see that there is always a force to oppose them: that is what is wanted. Protect the Cabinet if you please; but always cherish and support your Opposition. A Government is never wanting; there will ever be statesmen to form an administration: but if Parliament should once consent to part with its glorious Opposition, if the day should ever arrive when

the ministerial benches fill to an overflow, and there are none opposite to oppose; not one; then will the state have lost one of the firmest of the pillars which now render it indestructible! the invaluable support derived from the antagonistic principle!"

But it in some way happened, notwithstanding this steadiness and inveteracy of purpose, that Parallel, in his Parliamentary practice, failed to obtain in the right quarters a high character for consistency; nor was his reputation in that respect advanced by the course which he pursued from time to time, with regard to many motions and measures brought forward. One he resisted this session, because it was resisted last session; and though others agreed to carry it now, alleging that the difference in respect to time had removed every objection, he took the more consistent course of persevering. Again: to a certain measure, which was likely to prove when introduced in a particular form, mischievous in practice, he offered his strenuous opposition, and was one of a large majority; but upon another occasion, when the measure was again introduced, and his resistance to it was equally strenuous, he found himself rewarded for his consistency by being left in a whimsically small minority.

Now why was this? and why call him inconsistent? The inconsistency was wholly theirs, who had either altered the tendency of the bill, or reproduced it under the most dissimilar circumstances; thus wheeling completely round, while Parallel, steady, honest, plain-sailing fellow! simply repeated his vote, and maintained the integrity of his principles.

Parallel's consistency was not understood in that house; it was not appreciated; and one example of it, made in the character of a free and independent elector,

cost him his seat as soon as an opportunity offered for ejecting him. The occurrence was simply this, and surely it speaks to the skies for his consistency.

In two places, a county and a borough, in each of which Parallel had a lawful vote to give, two candidates appeared bearing the same name; and to an elector interested in both contests, it appeared but consistent voting for one, to vote for both. It may be mentioned, however, that the politics of the two candidates were as opposite as their colours, and these, perhaps, were crimson and sky-blue. But Parallel only saw, in the support of the namesakes engaged in different contests, a clear case of consistency.

"I have given my vote this morning to Wood, in Southwark," he said, "and it would be grossly inconsistent now to refuse my vote to Wood in Middlesex!"

And it is true enough that, though the two Woods flourish in such different soils, when asked by the proper officer for whom he wished to vote, he consistently answered, "Wood!"

This straightforwardness of purpose did him no service, and indeed the vote is said to have been his last public act, and a kind of leave-taking of political life. Some moral philosophers in these days scarcely know consistency from crookedness.

Parallel's conduct, as a free and independent elector, was condemned. But we must accompany him into social life, and see whether, in yet a different light, he be still the same. Here, in his various paths, he kept, it is superfluous to say, his old principle ever before him; but then this same consistency was often, or rather continually, his rock-a-head. He practised tyranny in place of affection, perpetrated mischief where he designed benefits, entangled himself in scrapes and dilemmas,

and destroyed the fairest chances of creeping forward to security or soaring upward to success, by a rigid observance of his whimsical rule of consistency.

When he found that his youngest boy had broken the new pier-glass, reluctant to punish the dear little fellow alone, he flogged the whole seven for consistency's sake; and when some kind soul (there's plenty of Christianity in the world yet) offered to get the second lad into a public office (thus passing over the eldest son), and to send the fourth to a commercial academy (where the third had never yet been), the proposition so perplexed Parallel with its extreme and intolerable inconsistency, that he rejected it past recall before he could escape from his bewilderment.

Then, though he esteemed himself a prudent father, and had in reality a deep and strong flow of affection, he could not be prevailed upon to settle his children in life according to their aptitudes; leading them with gentleness, yet allowing scope to their natural inclinations: but instead, he determined arbitrarily, though placid in disposition as in name, to bring up one boy to this and another to that calling; not because the trade was prosperous, for it was an expiring one; nor because the lads liked it, for they hated it; but simply because all such important steps in the world should be taken with consistency, and his grandfather, who had also seven sons, had brought them up to those very professions at a period when they were the high road to fortune. The apprenticeship once commenced, the term of years must be completed, and, in the teeth of ruin, the trade must be followed; for, as he always said, what can be more inconsistent than to learn an art and not practise it!

To this "complexion" then consistency brings him, when set in operation upon the family scene; and in

relation to various other essential points of social and domestic experience, he hardly fares better. One or two objections have been raised which some moralists would think as damaging to his character, as politicians would deem his black-and-white electoral vote.

Thus, he has been charged with allowing an insult to pass unexpiated, because the tone of the speaker was the tone of several at table. He pleads the gross inconsistency of exacting redress from one, when the offence was offered by twenty. And it has further been alleged, although many will think this much less injurious to his morals, that at one time he would pay nobody. Consistency imperiously forbade it, and such a proceeding would be profligacy.

"It is true," he is represented to have declared, as he sent his simple creditor away empty-handed, "it is true that the money is here, and that your claim is just; but, as I cannot at this moment pay everybody, it is clear that I cannot at this moment, with any pretence to consistency, pay you!"

His peculiarity discovered itself more or less disadvantageously in many of his tastes and habits. He never read a line of Walter Scott. To peruse all that so voluminous an author had written was barely possible; and to read a poem and a novel or two would be absurdly inconsistent. He never quitted England. Why? To go to Scotland without going to Ireland, to see France without seeing Italy, to traverse Asia without crossing the Atlantic, would be to render himself a monument of inconsistency.

Among his country preferences, sometimes, is a tendency still to take the old coach road, crawl along it as he may, though the coach is gone and the engine roars in the distance; and among his town predilections is a liking for the old London inns with queer names. His

father liked them, and his partiality is consistent. But Parallel would scorn to patronise only one at a time; there would be little consistency in that: so when he has dined at the Bolt-in-Tun, he feels that he ought to sup at the Bull-and-Mouth; it looks so consistent.

A different habit, however, is Parallel beginning to carry with him in his visitations among acquaintances. His consistency seems to tell him here, in language more explicit than new, that where he dines he should sup; in other phrase, that where he calls he ought to stay. Leaving a house after supper where there is a spare bed, appears to him a mere inconsistency. His family being away, home seems so very inconsistent, such an absurd place to go to. It would be equally so to prefer a stranger's tenement to a friend's. Parallel stops.

He has a tendency to be religiously consistent in his cups. At one house, demons could not tempt or intimidate him into drinking a third glass; at another house, angels could not persuade him to stop on the staggering side of intoxication. There consistency absolutely requires him to go quite down, and perfect propriety stretches Parallel under the table.

It will be found on investigation that he drank soda-water the first time he dropped in at one place; and that he struck his head against the bottom of a punch-bowl on his first visit at the other. He is consistent ever afterwards. The return visit to Parallel is sure to be attended with precisely the same consequences, and the toper who was his host yesterday, admits that the new orgie has at least consistency to excuse it.

One allusion may here be made that will show as well as any the present temper of Parallel, and prove that he is not invariably an answerer to his surname. Far less placid indeed than indignant is he, when he hears of

that ever audible and ubiquitous compound of simples, the great perambulating invisibility, Young England!

Young England! He cannot understand the *name*, and he knows there is no such *thing*. He understands Old England. Ah! that indeed is consistent. But there never was so monstrous an inconsistency as the bare idea of a Young England. There's the Isle of Man, he remarks, you may as well call that Young England. Britannia has now braved the battle and the breeze for a thousand years, and it is notorious that she has never had a boy. Search the births in the "Times" from before the Conquest. The British Lion himself might as reasonably be expected to present the nation with a cub. *Young* England! the whole thing is the wildest of inconsistencies!

Parallel, of course, is not theatrically given. Open theatres with a banished drama, constitute, as he declares, the climax of the inconsistent. He never goes to the Opera; he holds it to be inconsistent to pay for French dance and Italian song with English gold, especially as we have a little of that sort of thing of our own.

A sentence or two will suffice to indicate the opinions of the consistent man upon one or two topics of the day. He deems it extremely inconsistent to describe the small allotment system as a little cluster of paradises for the poor; but he is convinced at the same time that the refusal to acknowledge, in the allotment of even half an acre, a something infinitely more beneficial than nothing, is a decided inconsistency. He is friendly to bathing and wash-houses; thinks soap a blessing, and rejoices when everybody is well off for it. But soap he believes to be a material that requires something like consistency, or the peaceful ablution may end in hot water and a bubble.

From these, a few of his late opinions, we pass to a late event, and to Parallel Placid himself; and with a rapid sketch of the very last incident of his life with which we have been made acquainted, shall we bid him adieu.

Parallel then, after running a consistent course of wedlock for thirty years, is a widower. The lady who traduced Mrs. Crony in so friendly a spirit, and who in turn was belied by Mrs. Doubleshuffle with such genuine affection, that fair breaker-up of consistently-formed friendships between married immaculates, is no more. Parallel Placid might well say that home was an inconsistent place to go to.

Parallel's seven sons are in seven different counties just at present; he prefers the consistency of that equal dispersion. He himself is in an eighth; almost sixty, and quite solitary. What remains for such a man as Parallel to do? Is he to remain a widower? that at all events would be perfectly consistent. Is he to marry again? Consistency, the most rigid and scrupulous consistency, has not invariably condemned the alternative. Speculation may take to her perch upon the ground and sit on either end of it, while her eggs are being hatched in the clouds.

Will Parallel continue widower, or become Benedick the Second! a "married man" the second time! Further catechising would be inconsistent. Parallel will marry again, and there's an end.

Yes, the end is here, for what remains! The man of consistency is to take a second wife, and being "always consistent" his choice is doubtless made. It is. Parallel is nearly sixty, and chooses accordingly. He is not old, though far from young. He may count twenty white winters upon his dark gray hair yet. He looks well, is well, and is likely to be well. His family are self-sup-

ported, sheltered, havened, so far beyond all fear of peril to any of them, that even the youngest of the seven revels in a sunshine where he can never feel a fit of shivering from the chilling embraces of a step-mother. With a consistency, almost, if not entirely unimpeachable, Parallel may marry again at fifty-five and upwards!

And yet there is something in a marriage at that age! sons! grandsons! But this is perfectly absurd. All depends on a consistent choice; and that once made, the world may well wish the wedded joy, and the wedded may well calculate on the realisation of the wish. Happiness, therefore, will light on the choice of Parallel. He is a man of undeviating consistency, and the new Mrs. Placid will be gay, charming, good-humoured, vastly good-humoured; she will be pretty, ripe, radiant with a desire to please, hospitable to a fault (if such a thing could be), kind to every body that deserves kindness, and a few here and there who do not; resolved to please all her husband's friends, but especially determined, of all earthly things, to delight her husband. Such is the lady whom Parallel will choose, and her age must be ——

Ah! there 's the point. All else is unexceptionable. But Parallel you know is a man of consistency!

And addresses himself to a lady—

True, of the exact age of his first wife; and he and his first wife married almost as a girl and boy.

"I am consistent in everything," placidly remarked Parallel. "My first wife when we married was eighteen; my second wife when we marry next week will be eighteen also! Ah! I am always consistent!"

Alas! for the man of undeviating consistency! Every body is wishing every body else a happy new year just now; and possibly Parallel may come in for his small pickings in the scramble of the millions. But, if we

remember rightly, he once philosophically remarked that having long since made up his mind to live, he thought he should one day or other make up his mind to die; just for the sake of consistency. Now when sixty marries eighteen——but he knows best about the time. He is *always consistent!*

KEEPING IT UP.

"Oh! what a pity!" exclaimed little Lucy S——, as she read in the newspaper the other day how Mr. Green, instead of attempting to fulfil his design of crossing the Channel in his balloon, had, in consequence of adverse weather, descended on the coast of Sussex; "how provoking! Why didn't he *keep it up!*".

Lucy S—— is certainly one of the liveliest little ladies living, but desperately bent upon running to an extreme, and alarmingly prepossessed by a fondness for keeping it up.

Ah! poor child, thought I (though she's as old as I am, and wiser, in all things but this one), that pretty, fair-haired head of thine will surely go, some of these days, bump against the full moon. No need of a balloon to help you to rise into the air; and once aloft, you would be for keeping it up though you were within a mile of Mercury!

What notions, to be sure, some people have of keeping it up! Squarer and solider heads than Lucy's are often known to run themselves against the same wall, though from a different point; heads, well-lined with lead, too, yet there is no keeping them steady.

Keep it up they will, like Lucy S—— at a ball. She, the small, slight, fragile thing, apparently incapa-

ble of undergoing fatigue, is untireable. Her delicate frame seems little formed for toil and exertion, even in the pursuit of pleasure, yet she will wear out the strongest, and laugh afterwards at the bare idea of exhaustion. Fatigue to her is what fear must have been to Nelson, when hearing it spoken of, he asked, "What *is* fear?"

At every fresh dance after five in the morning, you would say she was beginning again, if it could be said that she had ever left off since the first commencement at ten in the evening. In the full light of day she is but in the middle of her night's frolic. The laws of time, of sleep, of physical endurance are set aside, and she defies human nature to droop while it can be kept up. Long after the last disappointed sandwich-seeker has glided away, the last listless fingerer of the piano has dozed over the keys, the last dangler of the dance has dragged his slow length down stairs to the door, where a rush of beauteous daylight makes the revellers of night hideous, will the exclamation rise for the hundredth time to her lips, sharp and prompt as ever—"Come, *begin;* who are in the next dance?"

Small, delicate, aerial Lucy S——! yes, one might swear that she could no more toil or spin than one of the lilies of the field which she eclipses in its native glory; and yet there she is, toiling and spinning through life as though it had no end; never once wanting that, which so many troubled and weary hearts are doomed to want always—rest, rest, rest.

When she has seen an exhibition in the forenoon, she is ready for a concert at one; and the opera or a play at night, admirably qualifies her for her evening's pastime afterwards; her few songs, or her quadrille, or her laughing, innocent game of romps, or an eager, animated dissertation on *all* the new novels; oceans of them are

not too many. Her day is thirty hours long at least; and when her little wild head does at length drop upon its pillow, it is only to dream that she is keeping it up still.

Well might she marvel, in her innocent and heedless enthusiasm, that one who had gone up in an air-balloon should ever have entertained the strange idea of coming down.

Lucy S——'s giddy exclamation suggested to my mind remembrances of the many modes of "keeping it up," by which people contrive to get driven out to sea when they might be safely lodged on the coast of Sussex; of the myriads of balloons that are adventurously kept up, until that unlucky and unlooked-for minute, when the descent becomes an involuntary one.

The angry wife is an aeronaut of this order. Knowing that words are but air, she fancies that she cannot have too many of them. Up she shoots, heedless whither the gust of passion carries her. Some uncomfortable sensation; a sudden chill at the heart; a pang produced by a nervous bite self-inflicted on the tip of the talking organ, whispers, perhaps, that she is going too far, and warns her to descend in time; but pride and folly tell her to keep it up in spite of everything, and just as she succeeds triumphantly in having what she was resolved to have, the last word, she suddenly drops, and sees herself "alone on a wide, wide sea," without a chance of rising more.

I thought as quickly of the perversity which the other sex exhibits in that and a thousand similar respects. I pictured the dissipated speculator who, finding that he has taken the wrong path, resolves to pursue it to the end, if only for the sake of seeing whether there is a thoroughfare or not. I drew an image of the foolish crotcheteer, who, rather than acknowledge that his *is* a

crotchet, would quarrel with the whole world; call friend and neighbour, knave and fool; and at last dashes his brains out to demonstrate his coolness and good sense. I saw in idea the hobby-hunter who, having just been thrown by one vicious jade, mounts with weakened limbs another of the same breed, and so continues riding between hospital and hospital; bravely resolved ever to keep it up, though evermore destined to be cast down.

The infinite shapes which folly assumes, when the principle of keeping it up has once taken possession of the soul of a sane being, occurred in rapid succession to my mind. One man gets trapped on the turf, only to learn the lesson that, once entered there, he must keep it up, or be ruined; another cannot for his life help riding after a pack of hounds of his own, and when he has shown that he can keep it up at a pretty good pace, everybody knows what animals he is going to.

A taste for farming takes hold of one sensible fellow, and when it has converted his head into a turnip of a very indifferent sort, he discovers that farming is a thing which requires to be constantly kept up, or else it is apt to prove a failure; while another, equally judicious, having sought the bubble reputation by inditing a pamphlet, finds out that fame requires to be kept up by continual effort, and so prints away a respectable fortune in pamphlets for private circulation.

If the same man entered Parliament, and succeeded in fixing the attention of the House, he would try to keep it up until two in the morning. If the country, in defiance of painful and high-priced experience, had been hoaxed into a belief in his patriotism and independence, he would keep up the old tone and the old air, long after the mask had fallen off, and go on trying to hoax still, to the end of life's stormy and unprofitable session.

Even in their pastimes, people exhibit the same par-

tialities, with, where this principle prevails, the same inevitable tendencies. The professor of boating keeps it up by rowing under a paddle-wheel, as the man of whist keeps it up by putting down double stakes.

In short, every man has his kite to fly, be it of what shape it may, and the majority are led on to constant but unreluctant sacrifice in the endeavour to keep it up.

Of all conceivable forms in which the false strain can betray itself, the most pitiful and humiliating, perhaps, is that which is commonly described by the expression, "Keeping up appearances." The ludicrous, to be sure, in many cases here, prevails over the lamentable. The shifts remind us too forcibly of our farcical friend Caleb Balderstone, to carry with them our graver sympathies, or to awaken serious resentment.

We laugh, for example, at the impotent attempt to make "plain Bill" look like "the page Adolphus;" and to our immense amusement, can see clearly through the clever window-blinds, carefully newspapered-up, to publish the false intelligence that the family are out of town for the season. The display of aristocratic cards on the little table in the passage, and the occasional mention of dear Lord Somebody, are nothing worse than a good joke; nor is it worth while, save for the sake of fun, to inquire too curiously into the bargain, by which the comfortable fly is to be made to look as unhired as possible.

But if we would see this sort of "keeping it up" in all its meanness and all its misery, we must step inside, become a boarder, and be as one of the disguised, the desperate, the forlorn family. Then shall we witness a series of anxious, agonising struggles, continued hour by hour throughout the long day, compared with which the life-and-death struggles of utter poverty itself are but as sports and pastimes under the wall of Paradise.

Of all torture, none can equal that which is forced to hide the natural expression of its suffering under a look of elegant and languishing repose; and of all the pangs of poverty, none can equal the anguish of a protracted and indeed endless effort to mask want under the appearance of ease and affluence. It is one of the peculiar miseries of this condition, that every attempt to conceal the cruel need is a sacrifice that adds to it; the guinea gracefully rendered to the superfluities, is actually stolen from the necessities, on purpose to show that they have no existence.

For the ends of true comfort and dignity, not a doit can be spared; all, to the very uttermost fraction, is needed to keep up the display of whatever is comfortable and dignified in the eyes of strangers, to the increased stringency of the hidden want within doors. Most melancholy, most degraded, yet wide-spread condition of the civilised lot! It is heart-sickening to think how many thousands, in every rank of life except the lowest of all, voluntarily submit themselves to the false law; and give up their hearts to the tearing and grinding of real suffering, suffering unspeakable, for the sake of keeping up a hollow, laughing fiction, that after a brief time imposes upon nobody; that nobody cares a straw about except in his own case; that excites neither respect nor envy, but ever insults the misery it helps to cause.

Is there a tyrant named in any language known to man, figured even in horrible fancy by any mind existing since the gloomy and portentous birth-day of the first Hypocrite, "a long time ago," that ever held, or ever can hold, so relentless and crushing a sway over all that is honest and naked in our souls, as this detestable and deadly tyrant, Appearances; this masked monster of whom nine-tenths of the human race are in some

shape, and in some degree, the slaves, the worshippers, and the victims!

A story occurs to my recollection, illustrative of another operation of this variously-acting principle, keeping it up, that will be novel to most readers, and not uninteresting to any. Many years ago it made its appearance where it now perhaps lies buried, amidst a mass of parliamentary news and political disquisition;* but it is an excellent story, and is related by a pen which, whatever may be its defects, never wanted the English literary virtue of being clear, homely, and expressive. It is as true and direct as Defoe.

"I was once acquainted with a *famous shooter;* he was a barrister of Philadelphia, but became far more renowned by his gun than his law cases. We spent scores of days together a-shooting, and were extremely well matched; I having excellent dogs, and caring little about my reputation as a shot, his dogs being good for nothing, and he caring more about his reputation as a shot than as a lawyer. The fact which I am going to relate respecting this gentleman, ought to be a warning to young men how they become enamoured of this species of vanity. We had gone about ten miles from our home, to shoot, where partridges were said to be plentiful. We found them so. In the course of a November day he had, just before dark, shot, and sent to the farm-house, or kept in his bag, *ninety-nine* partridges. He made some few *double shots*, and he might have a miss or two, for he sometimes shot when out of my sight, on account of the woods. However, he said that he killed at every shot; and, as he had counted the birds when he went to dinner at the farm-house, and when he cleaned his gun, he, just before sunset, knew that he had killed *ninety-nine* partridges, every one upon the wing, and a great part of them in woods very thickly set with large trees. It was a grand achievement; but, unfortunately, he wanted to make it a *hundred!* The sun *was setting;* and in that country, darkness comes almost at once; it is more like the going out of a candle than that of a fire; and I wanted to be off, as we had a very bad road to go, and as he, being under strict petticoat government, to which he most loyally and dutifully submitted, was compelled to get home that night, taking me with him—the vehicle (horse and gig) being mine. I therefore pressed him to come away, and moved on, in haste to be off. No; he would kill the *hundredth* bird! In vain did I talk of the bad road, and its many dangers for want of

* In Cobbett's Register.

moon. The poor partridges, which we had scattered about, were *calling* all around us; and, just at this moment, up got one under his feet, in a field in which the wheat was three or four inches high. He shot, and *missed.* 'That's it!' said he, running as if to *pick up* the bird. 'What!' said I, 'you don't think you *killed*, do you? Why, there is the bird now, not only alive, but *calling* in that wood;' which was at about a hundred yards distance. He, in that *form of words* usually employed in such cases, asserted that he shot the bird, and saw it fall; and I, in much about the same form of words, asserted that he had *missed;* and that I, with my own eyes, saw the bird fly into the wood. This was too much!—to *miss* once out of a hundred times! To lose such a chance of immortality! He was a good-humoured man; I liked him very much; and I could not help feeling for him, when he said, 'Well, *Sir*, I killed the bird; and if you choose to go away, and take your dog away, so as to prevent me from *finding* it, you must do it: the dog is *yours*, to be sure.' 'The *dog*,' said I, in a very mild tone; 'why, there is the spot; and could we not see it, upon this smooth green surface, if it was there?' However, he began to *look about;* and I called the dog, and affected to *join him in his search.* Pity for his weakness got the better of my dread of the bad road. After walking backwards and forwards many times upon about twenty yards square, with our eyes fixed to the ground, looking for what both of us knew was not there, I had *passed him* (he going one way, and I the other), and I happened to be turning round just after I had passed him, when I saw him putting his hand behind him, *take a partridge out of his bag, and let it fall upon the ground!* I felt no temptation to detect him, but turned away my head, and kept looking about. Presently he, having returned to the spot where the bird was, called out to me, in a most triumphant tone, '*Here! Here!* Come here!' I went up to him, and he pointing with his finger down to the bird, and looking hard in my face, at the same time, said, 'There, I hope that will be a *warning* to you never to be obstinate again!' 'Well,' said I, 'come along;' and away we went, as merry as larks. When we got to Brown's, he told them the story, triumphed over me most clamorously; and though he often repeated the story to my face, I never had the heart to let him know that I knew of the imposition, which puerile vanity had induced so sensible and honourable a man to be mean enough to practise."

This, oh! sweet little Lucy S——, is no uninstructive chapter in the history of human character, if you will but bow your head quietly to read it. This all comes of the determination not to give in; in other words, of that same disposition to "keep it up," whereof we are discoursing; and he who permits himself to be so

carried away by vanity, may perchance fall headlong into a deeper sea than the aeronaut whose machine bursts a mile above the broad ocean. Cobbett's "famous shooter" had a reputation to keep up, but he was at least as expert with the longbow as with the gun, and could maintain a falsehood as easily as he could fire.

Let those, dear Lucy, who are but just beginning their course of lies in life, only think for an instant, how and by what means sportsmen of this order, when they have once declared that they brought down their bird, will dare to keep up their fiction! by what means, being wrong at first, they will at all risks move further from right, rather than own the error! What cloaks of falsehood (that become as winding-sheets) they will fling around them, to conceal the first flimsy garb of deception which vanity had prompted them to put on! What blackness they will dye their brows in, rather than be seen to blush!

Oh! my Lucy S——, never in your own person can you need a lesson so grave as this; but you may require to learn that people should not keep it up overmuch, even when the object is but a shuttlecock. Some will keep up their very jokes, until they are echoed by sighs of pain instead of laughter; their little friendly hoaxes and mystifications, until they become offences dire. Some cannot so much as fall into the humour of a lively laughing game of frights, without frightening somebody else into fits; they must keep it up. Be not this fault thine.

But to show thee that every rule has its exception, take this loving, if still needless, hint into thy gentle keeping. When thou hast a good cause to uphold, a cause just and generous, uphold it perseveringly, let it not fall: and as, unburdened by ill thoughts or ill deeds, thy conscientious little head, amidst the many

that hang down abashed and afraid, is turned, in thy wanderings upon earth, toward the heaven where angels weep over the fantastic tricks of mortals—why, "*keep it up!*"

WOMEN AND THEIR MASTERS.

"Most women have no characters at all."—POPE.

No characters! What then, thought I the other evening, as Martha entered to light the reading-lamp, whilst I again took up the volume which had been laid down as the shadows of twilight came on, and prepared to pursue my pleasant way through the curious and original pages of "Woman and her Master;" what then must become of that hapless majority of the female race (poor things!) who depend upon servitude in some shape or other for existence; who in infinite forms and endless diversities of occupation, are hand-maidens unto us the masculine ringers of bells and issuers of mandates; and who, if destitute of "characters," can have no situation in society, no place in creation!

It was, perhaps, the entrance of Martha that turned the tide of my thoughts into this channel, suddenly diverting the course of speculation from the grand subject of woman and her master to a single branch of it; to the condition of one great class of womankind, maids of all-work, mop-spinners multitudinous, household varieties, all coming under one sweeping denomination, though all ranking in due degree, whether as plain cooks or pretty nursemaids—Betty Finnikins *ad infinitum*.

Lady Morgan's researches and reflections had pre-

viously suggested a train of ideas associated, not with Woman and her Master, but with Man and his Mistress, which it would here be irrelevant to pursue at any length. Enough if we turn from any historical facts that may be adduced in proof of the injustice and barbarity of the mastership which man has claimed and established over woman, to contemplate the state and condition of the half-dozen powdered and gold-laced lackeys whose souls hang on the breath of any mortal dowager that shall be named! Turn we to that picture and see what a fearfully avenging spirit it portrays! It may be perfectly true, for aught we know quite positively to the contrary, that the profligate Menelaus deserted his fond and faithful wife, and then accused her of eloping with the Trojan youth; and it may be equally true that Mr. Brownrigg, about a century ago, was in reality the perpetrator of that atrocity in the coal-hole upon two unfortunate apprentices, of which it was the fate of poor innocent Mrs. B. to bear the punishment and ignominy. Still that pair of flashy footmen yonder, specimens of the lordly superiority of man, having a soul apiece, and hanging on behind my Lady Lacklustre's carriage, as it is whisked from shop to shop, and house to house, on errands the most frivolous, and enterprises the least dignified imaginable; those two samples of the "beauty of the world," the "paragon of animals," the "quintessence of dust," reduced to that extremity, are evidences of a horrible system of retaliation, and prove woman to be exceedingly well inclined to pull down, wherever she may, the boasted dignity of the master, man.

> ——"Man to man so oft unjust
> Is always so to woman,"

insists another great authority; but man is not so unjust

as to dress up two women in the most grotesque and ludicrous finery, and set them swinging behind the vehicle he lolls in. Great conqueror and despot as he is, he does not absolutely drag the other sex victims at his chariot-wheels in triumph. From what is, we infer what would be. Every woman would be a lady of quality if she could, and where is the lady of quality that would be content with two beings of the "superior race" behind her coach, if she could conveniently have four? Who are so fond of parading the costly trappings of a crowd of wretched coxcombs in livery as women? What fine people take such pride in their footmen as fine ladies? It would be pleasant to know what Mrs. Sparkle's rascals in peach-coloured plush think upon the great question between woman and her master.

But, passing all such considerations, let us return to the race of female domestics, of whom there are about a dozen rushing at once to memory, as you may see them crowding round the door of a registry-office, waiting, as they would phrase it, to be put into black and white. "No characters at all!" Why, every man, bachelor or Benedick, who has looked or listened to any purpose, must have detected in the genus "Maid-servant," instances of the most extraordinary character; character as strongly marked, as widely various, and as richly comic, as in any heroine of farce that has been seen realised to the very life on the stage by our most popular actresses. What exquisite oddities and what outrageous opposites have we not all beheld, if we would only take the trouble to call them to mind! It is their mistresses generally who vow that they are all alike; the mistresses, who do bear a striking resemblance to each other, in the view they take of the characters of the maids! Poor drudges! If one be slovenly, the cry

is, it's the way with them all. If another purloin the tea and sugar, for which she has received an allowance in her amount of wages, the particular judgment involves a general censure, and the impossibility of finding one that is honest is established. But so far from being like each other, the variety extends even to the bounds of a probability that you can't find two alike. The class-likeness goes scarcely further than certain habits and usages common to most people; the disposition to lie in bed of a morning as long as they are allowed; to go to the play or the fair as often or oftener than possible; to relieve the tedium of a domesticated lot by letting in frequent visitors, seeing that their entertainment is as cheap as it is cordial. All maidservants are alike perhaps in other points. Each possesses a box, which is thought to contain a prayer-book, a dream-book, and six yards of songs; with probably a lock of hair, or a valentine, much worn at the folds, and certainly the holiday ribbons. They are all alike moreover; all under forty-five; in a taste for flirting with the genteeler section of the various purveyors who pull the area-bell every morning. But else how opposite is each to each! how broadly distinct! as different as their eyes are from their ears!

The maidservants in large towns, and in quiet country residences, in great families, and in tradesmen's houses, are all separate classes, of course; as apart from each other as the servant of the inn may be from the servant of the court, or as the drudges of the inns of court are from the select society of ladies'-maids. But the difference does not end here; for the lady's-maid does not less resemble the fat scullion than one individual of a class resembles another. It was my fortune, in those days when independent bachelorship had succeeded to parental subjugation, to note in one queer lodging-

house a succession of Sarahs and Betsies that was almost as rapid as the transformations on the stage when six characters are sustained by one performer, but the characters themselves formed a variety beyond the ordinary reach of such representations. Some are wholly forgotten, but of several the recollection remains to this hour, rendered vivid and complete by some saying or doing that serves as a key-note to the peculiarity of the character.

For an example to begin with: the first that comes to mind, and it happens that the catalogue, like the list of the ladies (not to be more particularly alluded to) whom the poet loved, opens with Kitty. What a curiosity she was! She ought to be a cabinet-minister, or a representative of the people in parliament at least; not because she was distinguished for punctuality in the discharge of her duties, but because she was so wonderfully expert in the art of making excuses for neglecting it. She was certainly the most careless little chit that ever spilt hot water over you, or left your new boots burning in the fender; but it could not be otherwise; so unceasingly and so profoundly must her mind have been intent on devising excuses for negligence and vindications of her conduct. Her small, keen, fixed gray eye told you plainly before you began to find fault, that she had made up her mind not to admit she was in the wrong, and her lips, the instant she opened them to explain, confirmed the ocular assertion. It was not merely that her excuses were generally first-rate, but that she was never without one. A dozen times a day she would be put upon her defence; but you might be sure, in that case, of witnessing exactly twelve apparently unstudied exercises of startling ingenuity in clearing herself from the charge. She threw her flip-flaps, if the metaphor may be allowed, with the

readiest grace in the world, and so quickly, that you could never catch her off her feet. Her figments were uttered with the most inartificial air ever witnessed. When you thought she had not a word to say for herself, out she would come with a volume. Her system of excuse involved a most philosophical supposition, that as human nature is a more precious thing than aught else in creation, animate or inanimate, so anything was to be blamed rather than that. If this be not new in theory, it was at least novel in practice, to the extent to which she carried it. Mats if she tripped, coals if she scorched anything, bore the blame. As the feminine is more worthy than the neuter, the neuter was of course shown to be in fault.

You complained of her bringing you an unpolished tumbler: "Kitty, whenever you bring me a glass, see that it is quite bright; of all things I hate a dull glass." Yes, I think I see her taking the glass, holding it up to the light, and pretending to examine it with a puzzled look, saying half to herself, "Curious tumblers these are somehow; I never seed glasses catch the *fluf* off the napkin like these do." I was rash enough to set her to bring me down a rare old china jug, prized for the sake of a former possessor. Of course she broke it, and had there been two she would have broken both. Into the room she came with the beautiful handle swinging upon her fingers, saying with the most delicious air of simplicity and wonderment that can be conceived, "Dear me, well! If I wasn't coming so softly down stairs, and had hold of it so, when just as I set my foot on the very last stair, the jug *let go of my hand!*" She could never be brought to admit more upon such occasions than what in effect amounted to this: that the smash was an act of pure volition on the part of the broken jug; that she, innocent as she was, had been

sent to fetch a very wilful and obstinate utensil, a piece of china resolutely bent on self-destruction.

There were traces of a curious perception of certain zoological distinctions, in some of Kitty's self-defences and evasions. I remember that some small delicacy, or what remained of it at dinner, had been specially put by for me as a relish for my breakfast; but when Kitty, to whose care it had been consigned, produced it next morning, the edge of the dish bore evident marks of the excursion of some small four-footed invaders. "Oh, the mice!" exclaimed my landlady in horror. "Why, Kitty, how could you now—?" &c. But Kitty was quite certain that the muscipular footmarks could have no connection with the feet of a mouse; no, the dish had been where mice could never be; it was quite impossible.

"Well, Kitty, look; do look, and believe the evidence of your own eyes." "I'm right, ma'am," said Kitty, after she had taken a careful and conscientious survey all round the edge. "I'm right; and if I wasn't positive certain, I wouldn't say so; no, *they're not our mice.*" Our mice! To detect a difference between other people's mice, and our own! Why, all the zoological council assembled couldn't have done it!

Kitty was succeeded by a little damsel who was called Ellen, a sprightly, bright-eyed thing, far too slight for the coarse offices allotted to her, and with something of childish elegance about her air that might have graced a lot far different from a life of servitude. Her character was as strikingly seen in all she did as Kitty's was. In her the ruling principle was politeness. To be polite was an instinct which she could not but obey. The first glimpse I had of the girl, was on the morning after she came, when, glancing from the window while dressing, I saw her running down the steps very prettily, and in

sweet clear tones calling out, "Sir! sir, if you please!" to the dustman. His bell drowned the small voice, but she went springing after him a little way, and I could perceive that she brought him back with an air not less full of natural grace, but less ostentatious, than that of the nymphs who precede the great princes in romantic operas and ballets, and throw flowers in their path. The scene ended in her smilingly begging his pardon, and *would* he have the kindness to come in and take away the dust that morning! The next day I heard her tell the fishmonger's boy when he called for orders, "Soles, sir, if it's quite convenient." So completely was this principle of excessive urbanity and deference a part of her nature, that it was in operation on all occasions, and extended to all comers. It was no respecter of persons, recognised no distinctions, real or false:

"But like the sun, it shone on all alike."

There was nothing; no, not a dash of the high-life-below-stairs vulgarity in her courtesies to the gardener, or the stable-boy. The chimneysweep was just as sure of a gentle and gracious reception. In short, little Ellen could not, though she had tried, have laid aside the bland and most urbane qualities of her manner. As little was she capable of divesting them of their real grace, or of having them mistaken for affected airs and mock civilities. She was polite merely because she could not help it. True, her politeness was excessively ludicrous sometimes, and now and then rather embarrassing, when it implicated others by taking upon itself to speak for them. Thus I overheard her one morning prefacing a message I had given her for the bootcleaner, with my "compliments" (she was polite enough to call me her master, which I was not), her master's compliments, and he thought the boots had not been quite so

well polished of late! She never received even a command from any one without a "thankee," and she always took a letter from the postman with a nice little courtesy, and a smile of acknowledgment that implied a sense of obligation for his kindness in bringing it. "My master's much obliged," she would sometimes say, as she handed the twopence. I'm not sure that she did not, one wet day, crown her politeness by offering to come and ask me to lend the postman my umbrella; she was certain he would get wet; and carrying other people's letters too!

One occasion I particularly recollect, and it affords a good illustration of Ellen's sensitiveness on the score of giving trouble. A man had brought me some books, for which, on delivery, she impressively thanked him; when, as he was turning away, it occurred to him that he had a letter to deliver with the packet, and he began to search industriously in his bag. Observing the anxiety with which he pried into the corners of it, she said to him, in her excess of good-nature, "Oh, sir, pray don't trouble yourself."

"Trouble myself!" returned the honest man, elevating his eyebrows rather contemptuously, "why, if I have a letter to deliver as well as the books, I must deliver it, musn't I?" and he proceeded with his search for a minute or two, when Ellen's good-natured concern for him broke out again, with, "I'm sorry to keep you waiting."

"Waiting!" muttered the messenger; "why, it ain't you that keeps me waiting. But no, there's no letter here; certainly not; well, I thought I had one."

"Oh, sir!" cried Ellen, bent on tranquillising his mind, and settling the matter with the truest politeness and delicacy of feeling, "oh, sir, never mind; I dare say it doesn't signify; *another time perhaps!*"

Ellen's stay in my landlady's service was not of long duration; for my landlady herself was taken suddenly ill, was dying. A friend of the invalid sent twice a day to inquire how she had slept and how she had sat up. Ellen regularly brought down the answer, "My missis's compliments, and she has had a very indifferent night;" or "My missis's compliments, and she feels very weak to-day." This went on for six weeks, twice a day for six weeks, and Ellen seemed to grow more and more sensible of the kindness and attention every time the messenger came. The compliments were sent back as usual, but the intelligence became sadder and sadder. At length, one day, when the friendly inquiry after the health of her mistress came as before, poor Ellen crept to the door with swollen eyes streaming with tears, and sobbed out the melancholy answer, "My missis's compliments, and she died this morning at eight o'clock."* Here is the "ruling passion" displaying its strength, not exactly in death, but in its close neighbourhood.

This change brought other servants, though it did not render my removal necessary. Among them came a girl of a most literal and matter-of-fact turn of mind, who persisted in calling herself Sophonisba, because she was so christened, but who for that reason I remorselessly cut down to Soph. She never could comprehend why the other three syllables should be lopped off; why people should be called "out of their names." The first specimen of her "characteristics" that I noticed, was when I sent her to Longman's (years ago) to get some old book, and she brought back the answer in

* A friend to whom I related this strange story, thinks he has heard something like it before. That may be, but it does not disturb my fact. In recording these little whimsicalities of character, I am recollecting, not inventing; and will vouch for every word of them.

these terms: "Please, sir, Messrs. Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, say that the work is out of print." She would rather have perished than omitted a partner, and she would have added "and Co." had she found it on the doorpost.

The gentleman who denied that the Duke of Wellington could ever have reaped any of his laurels in India, seeing that the laurel does not grow there, was less literal than Soph. It was absolutely necessary to speak by the card when you spoke to her; but even then you were not safe. Her capacity for not comprehending, was as profound as Kitty's ingenuity in framing an excuse. You took especial pains, say, to warn her against the hard-egg-boiling principle; you picked the plainest words out of the dictionary to impress upon her mind the simple fact in natural philosophy, that three minutes will suffice for the boiling of an egg. At last you make her clearly comprehend, and feel that you may safely calculate on a breakfast. No, the eggs come up as before, hard as undertakers' hearts. "Now Soph," I cried out, on such an occasion, "how is this? Here they are boiled fit for a salad, in spite of every direction. What did I tell you?"

"Oh! sir, I remember exakly what you told me, and acted according. The eggs was in the water, to a moment, percisely nine minutes."

"Nine! I told you three."

"Yes, sir, but there's three eggs. Of course, if one takes three minutes boiling, three *must* take nine. I may be a fool, sir, but I happen to know what three-times-three makes for all that!" Soph was incorrigible; she was a plague perpetually, and longer.

But though Soph had not an *iota* of imagination, the excess of the matter-of-fact of which she was made sometimes bordered on the imaginative, as the ridicu-

lous approaches the confines of the sublime. She understood no more of Life and Death than a great philosopher. If she ever conceived an idea in connection with them, it was perhaps that the second is what we may call a mere "carrying out" of the principle of the first, the continuation of what *is*. She had no notion of their being distinct or dissimilar. It was impossible that she could imagine a different state of being to that which, living, she experienced; nor could she more readily understand how the present state should terminate. The somebody that was dead, she could never picture to herself as in the slightest degree changed from the somebody that had been alive. A winged angel was not more unapproachably raised beyond the scope of her ideas, than was a mass of senseless clay, mute and motionless matter, cut off for ever from the life it had held and enjoyed. She knew nothing of either. She only knew that Susan Hicks, deceased, had been her fellow-servant in this world, and she considered that Susan Hicks, when she was carried to the churchyard, had simply taken another situation; in short, that she had gone to another place. We all know with what blank and unspeculative eyes a primrose by a river's brim would be seen by Peter Bell,

> And what it was to Wordsworth's eaf,
> A yellow primrose was to Soph,
> And it was nothing more.

But then, as was observed above, the acuteness of her sense of the actual, touched sometimes upon the verge of the ideal; and it might be said that she dived profoundly into the very surface of things.

A simple anecdote will help to explain all this. When the day fixed for the funeral of her old fellow-servant came, Soph evinced considerable sensibility on the score of the weather, which looked dreadfully unpromising.

I suspected that Soph's feelings were enlisted on behalf of the bombazin of the mourners, but it was not that, as I found out presently. From my place near a window, it happened that I could see her coming every five minutes to the garden-door to look at the clouds. "It 'll rain presently, and preciously too," was the first cry. Then with her hand stretched out into the pelting shower, to feel whether it was real water or not, "Ah! here it comes down sure enough." Then in ten minutes more, "It 's set in for the day, that *I* can see, with my two eyes." (Some Sophs would have said, "with half an eye," but our Soph had no idea of any such optical subdivisions.) However, the day began to promise better presently, and out she came again, ogling the scattered clouds, and decided that she shouldn't wonder if it were to clear up after all; till at last, when it began to brighten beyond mistake, she came once more, with her mind now made up, "Yes, yes, it 's giving over now, *Susan will have a fine day to be buried!*" Not a thought about the followers in bombazin, the living clad in crape at so much per yard, but only about the late Miss Hicks, who was to set out on a long journey. She thought of Susan as having some business of importance to perform that day, as a traveller *nolens volens*, or as being doomed to take, without further delay, a very serious step in life. She would have said the same thing had it been a wedding that was to take place. "Susan will have a fine day to be married!" Here, again, is the ruling passion strong in affinity with death.

What is the name of the good doctor, who, propped up on his pillow, desired his servant to stir the fire and shut the door gently, for he was going to die? How scrupulously, and as a matter of regular business, would Soph have obeyed his orders! Rare Soph! How she

used to make me laugh! When she leaves her last place, and her name is headed with a large "WANTED," in death's list of advertisements, all I can say is, may she have a fine day to be buried!

The next name in my catalogue is Jane, who was old enough to have had a system of her own, and who invariably acquired one in whatever place she happened to be, but never acted upon it until she found herself in another service. What you expressly desired her to do in your own way, she did in point blank opposition to your orders, and according to the instruction she had received in her previous situation. This had evidently been her rule through life. She was a pattern of a servant after she had left your house. All your regulations were sure to be observed when she had quitted your service. Her rule of pleasing you was simply a dutiful observance of the whims of other people.

Jane was quite as original in all her proceedings as any of them, an odd mixture of the tractable and the obstinate. She blundered unceasingly upon the strictest system, and was so anxious to give satisfaction that she would never do what she was told for fear it should be wrong. Her best conscience was, that as she served you, so she had served her previous master; and though she had been inattentive to his desires, she was doing him ample justice in your family. She interfered with every thing and every body in the house, because all was not arranged in the order observed in Mr. Fitzcox's establishment. She worried the cook out of her life.

"Lor! do you put citron into that pudding? Mr. Fitzcox's cook never did. I'm sure I should never send up currant jelly with the haunch; Mr. Fitzcox couldn't abear it."

In defiance of the strictest injunction, she contrived to smuggle a climbing-boy up the chimneys because

Mr. Fitzcox's flues could not be swept nicely by a machine. Thus the rules of her last place, which she had rigidly disregarded there, were in your house brought into conscientious operation, and what you wished her to do would be faithfully done for your successor.

The only prank that she played off at my expense was, first, when she was caught tampering with the newsman, and endeavouring to exclude the "Morning Chronicle" from the house; I fancied from a horror of Whig principles, but it turned out that Mr. Fitzcox had always taken in the "Morning Post;" and, secondly, during my absence for a day or two, when she must needs carry my letters and newspapers down to the Travellers' club, to which I did not belong, because she had been in the habit of leaving Mr. Fitzcox's there, when he was not expected to return home. I told her she wanted a much more arbitrary mistress than the one she served; to which she answered, "I often wonder, sir, why *you* don't marry, and have an establishment of your own."

"Good heavens! why?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Fitzcox did!"

Rebecca succeeded Jane, but Rebecca was overmuch religious, and did not stay long. I believe I frightened her by a habit, not very moderately indulged in at that period, of spouting *Hamlet's* soliloquies and *Othello's* address, before the looking-glass of a morning, sometimes during the perilous operation of shaving. This profane practice, with the duty of setting out a card-table, two evenings a week, for a rubber at whist, was a shock she couldn't stand. All I can relate of her with certainty is comprised in her address to the cat, that was muttering "deep-mouthed thunder" at the door of the room, as she was quitting it one day.

"Ur—r—r—rh!" Rebecca growled forth as she went

down stairs, "ur—r—rh you! Where do you expect to go to when you die? *swearing* in that manner!"

How little do any of us remember compared with the quantity we forget! These, such as they are, and a dozen more quite as strongly marked, as distinct from each other, and as consistent with themselves, were noted within the space of two or three years. How many maid-servants worthy to be noted might the reminiscence of a lifetime recal to view! The Cloes, Flavias, and Narcissas of Pope live in the rare and exquisite beauty of the painting; but else how common! How much of the extraordinary in character is unseen in women of all ranks, merely because it is not looked for or expected, or because it has not been fashionable to recognise it. It is detected in the drawing-room only? Look into the kitchen, "up stairs and down stairs, and in my lady's chamber;" and wherever there is a woman there is a wonder.

"Of all the girls that were so smart," in one sense or other, I have a vivid recollection of fair Fanny. She was a curiosity of the Nervous School. How she used to faint away! Fainting is, in other girls, a weakness, an accident, or an expedient; in her it was a principle, it was her destiny. Her ruling passion pointed ever to a little purple cut-glass bottle, filled with pungent salts, the stopper of which was seldom allowed to remain in it more than an hour at a time. Exactly half her wages were spent in the purchase of stay-laces, which were continually being cut. It came out, upon inquiry, that she was the victim of sensibility. Fanny had fallen head over heels in love, yet decorously withal, with some gentleman's gentleman, who, insensible to the value of his conquest, had accompanied his master abroad, and left her to pine and wither in single uncomfortableness. But this would not have been her

lot either, had she not, one fatal Whitmonday, resolved on spending the evening of her holiday in the two-shilling gallery at Drury-lane. There, for the first time in her life, she saw a popular actor performing the character of *Rolla*. Now it might have happened to any other actor, at all events that particular actor is not responsible for the result, but it did so fall out that Fanny discovered, or fancied she discovered, something in the face, or voice, or manner, or the soul that shone through the eyes of *Rolla*, so strangely, so startlingly like the faithless gentleman's gentleman in Italy, that her heart leaped up as it never did when she beheld

"A rainbow in the sky."

One long, shrill, piercing cry of "Richard," rang through the crowded theatre; setting the dear little child of *Cora* (a stunted babe of eleven) screaming with sudden terror; and then Fanny fainted. From that moment fainting became a passion. It was a propensity that grew upon her with use, and she could no more have got through a day without it than she could have got through a week without sleep. It was her constant relief, her sweetest recreation. Merely to mention the name of *Rolla's* representative was at all times more than enough. Even the first syllable of that agitating name, as articulated by some pigeons that recreated in the next garden, sufficed to send her off six times a day. Nay, so strong is the sympathy, so subtle the affection, in these nervous cases, that, believe it or not, I only happened to make some allusion to "The Last of the Mohicans," while she was in the room, without mentioning the author's name, which she could never have heard of, when I saw her turn pale, and the little purple bottle was in additional requisition that morning. She used to tremble every time she saw the water-butt for

the supply of the garden, thinking from whose hands it came. My landlady was obliged to have her intermediate taken in in bottles; the barrel would have been heart-breaking.

Poor Fanny! she used to enjoy her holiday now and then so much, it afforded her such leisure for going off; she allowed herself a double supply of the pungent essence on those days. It was quite a matter of course to be told of a morning, "Fanny will finish dusting your books directly; she 's only going to faint;" or to hear the sensitive creature, when desired by her mistress to light the candles, cry out, "I 'll bring them in a minute or two, ma'am, as soon as I 've fainted!" Little did she resemble

> "Her who in sweet vicissitude appears
> Of mirth and opium, ratafie and tears."

Here there was no vicissitude. If there was a minute of the day when she was not "going," it was when she was gone. But it agreed with her, like a good cry.

There was a Sarah, too, who stayed a few days, and claims to figure in the queer collection. She was noticeable chiefly for her prodigious volubility, and a genius for the obscure. Unless she made a long speech she was wholly unintelligible. The first words I heard from her ran thus: "There 's never an umbrella in the house but two in the world, and t'other two 's in use." She would have been Irish, if any one country could have claimed such a compound. What Sarah said you might not understand, but you must hear, for her voice was loud enough to proclaim her quarrel with some "first cousin," one evening, outside the gate.

"It 's not," she remarked on that occasion, "as if I'd been an infidel to you; in fact it 's rather more not than t'other."

The "t'other," in both cases, is characteristic of the exquisite confusion of meaning. But when she could let her tongue fairly loose, to wander at its own sweet will, then was Sarah in her glory. The windows open, we could hear her holding forth to her companion below:

"This Easter Sunday! Bless my soul, and such bad weather! I assure you I remember the time having gooseberry-pudding for dinner on Easter Sunday; it was the time my poor mother was out nursing at Kingston; yes, it was Kingston, Kingston-on-Thames; and my sister made a gooseberry-pudding, and I know I didn't like it; yes, my poor dear mother, who's dead and gone now, was nursing of Mrs. Hardlington, and I know it was Easter Sunday, for I had a new frock on, a pink stripe it was, because I remember it had wire buttons down the back; it was too late on Saturday night to get cambric ones, so I put wire, and Mr. Macintosh came to see my sister Kate, and father wouldn't let him in, for he 'd never seen him in his life before; but I went out for the dinner-beer; I know it was the dinner-beer, for it rained, and I had my green-silk bonnet on; so as I was a saying, as I came back, Mr. Macintosh gave me twopence to tell Kate to come out if she could, and my grandmother used to encourage it. Well, my sister made the pudding; for poor dear mother that 's dead and gone, this time eleven year, was nursing, and so Mr. Macintosh used to come and stand opposite. I often think of that time when mother was alive, and we all had a mother then, though we haven't now; yes, we 've got a mother-in-law, because father married agin, he married the cook at Waterloo House, you know Hodgson's; and I'm sure I shall never forget Easter Sunday; for if you believe me, that day five weeks Kate was Mrs. Macintosh!"

Call her off you might, but she would return three-quarters of an hour after to the scene, and take up another thread of the story; "Ah! yes, and well do I remember father saying one day, 'Here, hem me these two white neck-handkerchiefs', just as I'm telling you, for it was a square of muslin he gave me, so I had to cut it in half; because he told me he was going out on Sunday at eight o'clock on a day's pleasure. Well, that happened on the 8th of May, and so I got up the next morning with something on my mind that told me, 'Sally, all isn't right.' So I was standing by the pump, and a lady comes up and says to me, 'Good morning, I think your name's Sarah?' 'Yes, Sarah Dixon is my name, I was born, bred, and christened so, and I shall carry it to my grave with me.' 'Well, Sarah,' she says, 'if you look on the table in your father's bedroom, that with the looking-glass, you will see a parcel, it's for you.' Well, sure enough there was something wrapped up in paper, foolscap paper, and a white wafer above all things. You might have knocked me down with a feather. Lo and behold a piece of cake, wedding-cake, and they'd actually been and married. You may be sure my blood was up, for you must know I'm rather fiery; I take after my poor dear mother for that; but she was a good creature, though she's dead and gone." Quiet home was ours when the head of the class of clacks was gone also.

— But I must come to a close, or my picture will be growing too large for its frame. Many a maid, besides this handful of Sophs and Sallys, whether of the cook, the housemaid, the servant of all-work, or the first-rate waiting-woman tribe, "wants a situation" in this little collection, and might say what the insulted sweep said to the dashing highwayman at the drop, "I've as much right to be here as you have." But all this time, while

attracted by the "women," we have neglected their "masters." The subject at its commencement had suggested the inditing a few paragraphs, which shall now be a few sentences on that theory of gallantry and devotion to "the sex," the maintenance of which is, in many handsome words, held by youthful, middle-aged, and elderly masculines alike, to be both a pleasure and a duty, but the practice of which, in so many handsome acts, is held to be neither one nor the other.

The sex! What does any one of us understand by "the sex?" What proportion of the female race does the word include in our ideas of its practical meaning? How many women do we mean to admit the existence of, as having a right and title to the exercise of that generous gallantry which we call a duty and a delight, when we speak of the sex? Just those comparatively few members of it who can afford to employ the rest to wait upon their wills, and do their spiritings gently. The "sex," as the claimant of the exercise of gallantry, and the inspirer of devotional respect, means women who hire other women as servants, and who don't live by arranging the caps and curls, or dusting the chairs and curtains, of other people. Where were those gentlemen educated, and at what hour of the day may they be met with, and in what city of Europe do they chiefly abide, who are gallant and tender to a maiden with a mop, unless with a view to injure and degrade her? The gallantry of man to the other sex, is simply a narrow class-feeling, not a sentiment as universal as the eyes and breath, and language and motions of woman. It is the principle that stands by its order, and stops there. The lady drops her glove, and a dozen cavaliers would sacrifice theirs, how white and well-fitted soever, in the dust, to spare her the fatigue of even glancing at it where it lies; but the cavalier who drops his glove

on the staircase, will allow any waiting-maid in the house to descend and pick it up for him. He will rush with an armful of shawls to save the lady "of his order" from a breath of air too much in her way from the door to her carriage; but you shall observe afterwards, that he is not at all shocked when the maidservant runs out into the rain, uncovered, to bring him his umbrella. He must not serve his sister so, he dares not serve his wife so; still less would he dream of serving his friend's wife so; but what does he care for Sue? "Who on earth," would the man of gallantry internally exclaim, if required to put himself a hair's-breadth out of the way, "who on earth, I should like to know, is Sue!" That she was mere woman, would go exactly for nothing.

PEOPLE WHO PAY DOUBLE.

Nelson, when he had but one arm to do battle with, had still two legs to stand to his colours on; so may honesty, with reduced means, with hundreds cut down to fifties, honesty put as it were upon half-pay, be still seen upright, strong on its feet, and holding to its principle.

But how if bravery, when bereft of a limb, have to do double duty! How if honesty, when impoverished, be doomed to pay double!

Nothing more widely spread, in this country, than poverty; and nothing more narrowly judged of and understood. When we look at the poor, the *paying* poor, who breathe the free air of merry England just outside the workhouse gates, we recognise the chief necessity of their condition, in the duty to persevere,

summer and winter, in a rigid and self-denying economy. But we rarely stop to note the working of a more cruel necessity in their lot; we do not mark that they are the victims to an incessant and inevitable extravagance.

We overlook the fact that the poor cannot economise. To possess too little, and to pay too much, are the chief features of their destiny. To stint, to spare, to make hard shift, to feel that the half-farthing will be practically in countless bargains a saving coin to them, yet to be constantly, hopelessly, necessarily extravagant; this is the lot of the poor.

Our talk all the year round is of the cheapest markets. These are exactly the markets to which the poor can never repair.

"Act upon my plan," cries Mr. Fitz-crœsus, thrusting his hands into his breeches-pockets; "everybody should do as I do. Come, I'll let you into my secret. Always buy the best. If you want to save, buy the best of everything. It's the cheapest in the end."

Fitz-crœsus is right; but then the poor are not "everybody." The poor, while they want to save, must buy the worst of everything, the dearest in the end. Their slenderness of means ever prevents them from securing a bargain. The price of the best, the cheapest in the end, obliges them to take the bad. With the most urgent necessity to economise, they are driven helplessly upon the improvident course. For the happy "end" they cannot wait; they must begin at once with what the deeply-skilled in the arts of true cheapness wisely reject.

The only riches that fall in the way of the poor are rich maxims, dropping like diamonds from the lips of the affluent.

"I buy three pairs of boots at a time; they last four times as long as a single pair." "I always pay six-

and-twenty for my hat; it lasts out half-a-dozen cheap ones."

And the poor mechanic, with his saved-up sixpences, and these gratuitous gems of economy jingling together in his ears, passes on unprofitingly, to buy his country-made shoes, and his sieve-like gossamer. He has not half enough money to purchase the cheapest. He bids as little as he may for the dearest in the end, which end very soon arrives; next Sunday, if it should happen to rain!

The food which nourishes him not, the raiment which wears and washes away with ruinous rapidity, the poor man must be contented to secure; contented amidst his wants to be ever deepening them, contented to pay double in virtue of the excess of his poverty. He knows his ill-fate, in this respect, but may not control it. Cheapness he esteems to be the peculiar, the enviable privilege of the rich.

But such as his purchases are, they are made at the lowest prices, nominally? on what is called "advantageous terms?" Seldom. The little shopkeeper with whom he deals is obliged to get credit, and obliged to give it. The poor customer probably never possessed in all his days so much as a single week's wages in advance of the world's claims upon him. That scanty pittance, the receipt whereof gladdens his inmost soul on a Saturday, is not capital, but income. It is not often to be spent at his will, here or there; but to be paid in quarters where it is already due. He must repair to the same familiar shop, rub off the regular score, and be, as usual, re-supplied. He may see in another window cheese more eligible, or a preferable style of pork; but his dealings are circumscribed; his little ready cash is bespoke. As the grand world boasts but one boot-maker, so his little world contains but one

baker. He cannot always choose his mart even for dear bargains.

Are there no other drains, peculiar to the nature of poverty, upon his slender resources? Several. But we shall exhibit enough when we show the tendency to waste, the unavoidable extravagance, of purchasing in every instance the very smallest quantities. The poor find out this hardness of their condition; but still unavailingly. They are obliged to watch for the turn of the scale, yet they lose some grains continually. Their provisions, if they could keep a little store, would improve in quality, and go further. Their half-ounce of something will serve but for one occasion, one meal; but could they have afforded to lay in a whole ounce, it might have served three times. Never by any turn in the course of fortune, can the cheapest way be opened to the poor. Every road has a turnpike for them; and as others seem to do on Sundays only, they pay double every day.

The poor receive with one hand, but they pay with both. We observe them living "from hand to mouth;" but when the hand barely reaches the mouth, and the effort and the strain grow greater day by day, we merely moralize on the evils of improvidence, and not on the impossibility of economising, after the fashion of wealthier professors, who exult in "lying in a stock," and securing the "cheapest in the end."

To pay double, however, is not the exclusive affliction of the poor; nor is the attainment of cheapness the easy privilege of the rich. The man of wealth, like the man of need, must almost necessarily pay double. His wide-necked purse may distend or collapse at his will, but he must generally, against his will, pay double. He may choose his servants, and change his tradesmen; but there are invariably two to one against him; and

the continual consequence is, the abominable double payment.

He pays the highest premium for confidential servants, who plunder him *cum privilegio*, and play the cankerworm *sub rosâ*. He gives the best wages, that his trusty servitors may be beyond the reach of temptation: and they sell his wax-lights to his own chandler before they have burnt half way. This is surely burning the candle at both ends, or, in other words, paying double.

The only choice he has is, not whether he will pay too much or enough, but whether the sum to be purloined from him shall be extracted from the right-hand pocket or the left. He may reduce his establishment, and keep but a single servant; yet a single servant is quite sufficient to make a man pay double. He may so watch the solitary extortioner, so cramp him in his sphere of action, so bind him down upon the rack of undeviating honesty, as to prevent all ordinary inroads upon his own pocket; but to do this, he must spend more in time than he can save in cash; more in labour than a statute-fair could relieve him from; more in health than his physician could restore him in fifty visits. It would be the very extravagance of economy. He would rob himself of his peace to save his purse. He would hang himself in a twelvemonth, through sheer anxiety to prevent another from incurring the penalty. He must keep his eyes open in sleep, and receive his guests by the kitchen-fire. He must be prepared to die the death of a martyr every day he lived; which would be paying the debt of nature, oh! more than double.

But without rendering himself a slave to servants or tradesmen, the rich man may exercise an ordinary sagacity, and forestal the practiser of imposition, by

striking off as an overcharge one half of the amount of every demand made upon him. Still, has he any security, granting that his deduction is assented to, that he is not agreeing even then to pay double?

"Five hundred is too much for the mare, Mr. Sharpe, two hundred and fifty is my maximum." "Ruinous!" returns Mr. Sharpe; "but I must trouble your lordship to draw the check." And the rich man still pays double.

Such is the tenor of every verse throughout the chapter. An individual is seldom so cunning as the world; and the world is ever lying in ambush near the rich man's pocket. If to counteract the effect of his losses, and to retort the aggressions which he cannot avoid, he sues his debtors, or squeezes his tenants without due secrecy and method, then the world pounces, not upon his pocket, but his reputation. He is damaged in character, ruined in temper, hurt a little perhaps in conscience; and thus, again, to avoid the evil of overcharge, he pays double in another way. The rich know that they are expected to pay, not at an *ad valorem* rate, but according "to their own honour and dignity;" which exactly doubles that of the class half-way down in the gulf of society.

Then it must be *this* class of persons, who seem to have just enough for their wants without a superabundance, by whom the penalty of paying double is felicitously avoided! We should judge hastily in so deciding. They have their debts, and duns, and difficulties, and consequently their double payments; like the notoriously rich and the notoriously poor. They borrow money at a hundred per cent., for the purpose, as they prettily phrase it, of settling with their creditors, and starting clear. They expect to receive cash in September, and therefore buy upon trust in spring

what they could get at half-price with ready money in the autumn. They promise to pay, and really *do* pay for the stamp on which the promise is written. Then follow law-expenses, and these soon leave mere *double* payments far in the distance. When the prison-door is double-locked upon them, they find that they have been paying both in money and repute, destroying their credit for probity, by actually giving forty shillings for a sovereign. If they can raise the wind high enough to blow them over the walls, they turn out to be rigid economists; and call a hackney-coach to drive to a cheap shop two miles off for a half-crown pair of gloves.

"Misfortunes never come single;" and if there be people, as some think there are, who deem the payment of debts a misfortune, they must of course pay double. We have heard of persons who pay beforehand, and who, being looked upon as the worst of paymasters, are made to pay again. This species of liquidator is fast dwindling away, and will soon be as extinct as Old Double himself, who died in the time of Shallow.

But Money (Heaven be praised!) is not the only substantial thing in this world of debtor and creditor. There is such an article as Love; but with the desperate determination of securing it, men, corrupted by habit in pecuniary affairs, will not scruple now and then to pay double; paying their addresses, that is to say, to two ladies at a time, or to one rather rapidly after the other. Then there is the social principle, which involves the paying of visits; and these are sometimes paid double, by guests who linger with the door in their hand an unconscionable time; promising, when they do go, to return speedily and spend a long day with you.

So, too, there are other purchases than those made in the cheap markets, which rich and poor have such difficulty in finding. Men buy fame and glory appa-

rently at a marvellously cheap rate; by the mere expenditure of sixty years of their lives, or at the total cost of their domestic happiness and quiet. But when they have bought fame and glory, they find themselves imperatively obliged to expend whatever may remain of liver or intellect, of worldly ease or moral energy, in protecting their purchases from the libeller, the detractor, the assassin. What a painful, what a sickening exhibition have we here, of the common lot, to pay double!

Self-love, no less than enmity, often enforces the double payment. The irascible and the obstinate, for example, inflict the evil upon themselves. The hasty unjust expression, at once recalled, seldom re-acts with fearful echoes in the breast of the utterer. But he has spoken it, and pride forbids him to retract; the summons to unsay it only irritates him to a fiercer extent; the consciousness that he is wrong galls him into a resolution to make bad worse; and the little word, the honourable admission, which frankly offered at first would have been received as an atonement, and have purchased him peace, deepens into the abject apology, a jury's verdict against a slanderer, or the dying groan of a duellist.

To obviate a gloomy ending, which our little essay needs not, we shall offer a simple suggestion. The surest way to prepare ourselves for a just and necessary resentment of injuries, is to cultivate a faith in kindliness, and to yield to instincts of generosity. There is at least one situation in life, and it is by no means of rare occurrence to any man, in which with immense advantage to ourselves we may liquidate a debt as it were by double entry, and savingly discharge a claim twice over. Reader, as often as you may experience that invaluable blessing, a liberal and timely opportunity of returning a kindness—PAY DOUBLE.

ANYTHING FOR A QUIET LIFE.

WHENEVER you meet with a poor wretch whose fate it is to be cuffed continually; buffeted by his betters, abused by his fellows, and halloed after in the streets by those free-born Britons, the little boys; tossed up and down like a crazy hull on a rough sea; driven to and fro like a canine lunatic, and assailed from morning to night with thoughts that scold, and words that hit; whenever you meet with this poor fellow, depend upon it, he is one who, from his very cradle, was fond of a quiet life.

Is he a fag in a factory when the world of machinery is all at work; is he a porter stationed in the rotunda of the Bank, a waiter at a London chop-house, an usher in a genteel seminary, a drudge to a letter of lodgings, a prime-minister, a curate in a populous metropolitan parish, a clown in the comic pantomime, an engineer on a railway, a cab-driver, or a queen's counsel in full practice;—be sure that his maxim ever has been and ever will be, anything for a quiet life!

The lovers of quiet lives are rarely to be found at the lakes, or among the hills; in the solitudes of the land, the rustic paradises of nature, amid simple dreamy scenes, far from the noisy haunts of the populace, with all their rabid passions and riotous pursuits; no, but they are to be met with constantly in Cheapside. They spend their days in a great Babel, hungering after quiet, and fancying eternally that they are just securing it.

The doctrine laid down in their ever-ready exclamation, "anything for a quiet life," implies the wisdom of making continual sacrifices to attain a desired end,

but not the wisdom of previously ascertaining whether it be possible by sacrifices ever to attain it at all.

It is clear that what seems the shortest road to an object is often no road to it at all. There is an example in the story which the witty moralist relates of the false expedient adopted by a mournful son to procure sorrowful faces at his father's funeral. He gave the mutes crownpieces, to purchase their sad looks; but they seemed now livelier than before, and he accordingly advanced their pay to half-guineas; whereat, instead of sighs and mourning airs, they smiled outright; when, to buy their deepest gloom, he paid them down guineas, at sight of which every vestige of sorrow vanished—and indeed he found that the more money he gave them to look gloomy the more merriment was in their faces.

In like manner, we may cite the popular practice of calling out in public assemblies, "Silence!" and "Hear, hear!" with sufficient loudness and constancy to ensure the vast and regular increase of the tumult; and it may happen that a continual struggle to secure a quiet life, is the very reason why it is invariably missed. A constant endeavour of any kind is scarcely compatible with the idea of quiet; and a life spent in sacrificing, in giving up every bit of ground, in yielding every point, and in beating an incessant retreat, for the sake of quiet, can hardly perhaps be called a quiet life.

Squalls was the person who of all others used to act most doggedly upon the principle of sacrifices for the sake of tranquillity. When he first entered the world, he set out on a journey in search of Quiet, and a precious noise he always made about it. His life was a pilgrimage to the shrine of Peace, but he was for ever getting into a "jolly row" on the road; and getting out of it, by a sacrifice that was sure to come too late; a surrender that purchased no quarter; a desire for

pacification that only provoked the enemy to further hostilities.

He never in all his days avoided a quarrel for the sake of quiet; he only avoided, for the sake of quiet, the sole means of bringing the quarrel to a peaceful end. He would begin a contest, but would never fight it out; content, when it was at the highest, when victory was all but his, and the desired calm could be commanded, to give in philosophically, to put on the air of a martyr, and to re-nerve his adversary by an exasperating panegyric on quiet. When the prize contended for was within reach, he would infallibly run away, but not in time to save himself. After an hour's yelping and barking, the dog would lie down, expecting to be allowed to repose because he left off.

How pleasant it was to obey his social summons, to take one's seat at his round table, and prepare, with three or four kindred spirits, to enjoy what he used to call a quiet evening! What a rare notion Squalls had of a quiet evening! After the toil and hubbub of a day of business, delicious indeed it was to settle down, all peace-lovers together, for a quiet evening!

The only misfortune was, that Squalls would wrangle; and it is not surprising, therefore, that the instant we had finished the prelude, the little discussion upon the weather, and had agreed that it was a delightfully calm night, a stiff breeze sprang up, and the storm opened upon us. In other words, the moment the contemplated quiet chat commenced, the "argument" began. Start what subject you might, Squalls had just one quiet observation to make, totally objecting. Remind him that the point might hardly be worth a dispute, and he would beg leave quietly to remark that a more vitally important point never could be pointed out. He would advance from an opinion to an allegation, meekly

suggesting now, and confidently asserting by and by; combating every principle laid down, resisting every argument raised, and protesting against everything that had been said; until, when he had succeeded, by fierce disputation, in setting us all by the ears, disturbing the peace and endangering the safety of the table, he would discover that the question of vital importance was really not worth talking about.

"I give in," he would cry; "I yield the point; dare say you 're all right, anything for a quiet life; a little quiet is worth all the argument in the world!"

And even this point, he would at the same moment be ready to defend most turbulently; just as a man might bet you two to one that laying wagers is an insane practice.

Squalls wrangled by the hour, by the day, week, month, and year; but was all the while in love with nothing but a quiet life. If, in the nightly contention for the prize of tranquillity, there were sometimes added to the horrid din of many human voices bellowing for peace and order, the clatter of tongs and poker; or, if a shower of glasses aided their contents in taking a too powerful effect upon his brain, he rather enjoyed than otherwise his broken head and fever-draughts, with the blinds drawn down, and the kind servant creeping so softly about in thick shoes, and the door creaking so very gently that it only just sufficed to wake him every time it closed or opened.

"There is something deliciously lulling," he would say, as he rolled his eyes about, "in this profound calm; I hope my head won't be better to-morrow; anything for a quiet life."

He resided in one of the streets in the Strand, leading to the river, "out of the noise," as he said. But he had a country-house, a most serene and rural retreat,

in a district dedicated to silence and solitude, where there was never noise enough in a day to break the flying slumbers of a lynx; a spot where you might hear nothing but

> "The motion of the elements, a song
> Of silence that disposed the listening soul
> To meditative quietness, and lulled
> Not passions only, but the animal powers
> With all their violent feelings. . .
> . . So entire
> Was the Dominion of Tranquillity."

"Come hither," wrote the sympathetic Squalls from his remote retirement; "hither, where peace and I reside, and finish your Ode to Contemplation." Once, and once only, was the invitation accepted. What a dominion of tranquillity it was!

For the quiet morning, after the early crowing, cawing, and chirping were partly over, there were the ringing of bells, the shouting of children, the clatter of forks and tankards at a never-ending breakfast, the barking of dogs, the rolling of wheels, the lowing of cattle, the laughter of rosy girls in high spirits, the report of fire-arms, and the loud bawling of divers of the smock-frock-tribe uttering no language at all, though severally convinced that they were all speaking plain English.

Then for the quiet evening: there were the most riotous rubbers of whist, tumultuous piano-playing, harp-playing, and flute-playing; forfeits, and how-d'ye-like-it; loud haw-hawing at frequent intervals, with songs comic and sentimental; and an occasional ear-splitting "yoicks" from a lively sportsman, when his heavier partner in the field-adventures of the day began to snore a little too vigorously.

Strolling into the garden to walk off the deafening

effects of the day's delights, "How charming is the quiet country!" would Squalls exclaim.

"Very," was the natural answer, "impressively reminding one of the soothing serenity of Covent-garden Market, and the silent pleasures of Smithfield-bars."

Quiet to Squalls was what the rasher of ham was to the thunder-stricken Jew; a delicacy which he could not enjoy, because there was such a terrible noise about it. At length, by and by, when by a course of accidents, our friend dropped down in the world, and it became necessary to seek some occupation, he made a rather sagacious choice. Far from the neighbourhood of noise he could not prevail upon himself to go; but he nevertheless sought freedom from trouble and tumult. He therefore accepted the office of money-taker at one of the leading theatres. "Here," he said, tranquilly, "I shall have a quiet time of it."

The desire of peace took a much firmer but scarcely more consistent hold upon another member of the same circle. Poor Pax! you and your wife, Bella, were an ill-matched pair. How came you to marry her? it was like going to Donnybrook-fair in search of some New Harmony!

The truth was, she would have him. She claimed him for her partner in waltz, galope, and quadrille seven times in one evening, and screamed him six bravuras between the dances. She talked him into fits, and assailed his nerves by means of the thundering double-knocks of postmen. The affair began to make a little noise, which he couldn't bear. Anything for a quiet life. It was easier to marry than to escape. He therefore quietly offered her his heart and hand, well knowing that as a wife she would neither want to dance with, nor to sing to him, to pour agreeable nothings in

his ear incessantly, nor employ tyrant-postmen to batter at his peace.

Pax had but a single idea, and a single mode of putting it in action; the idea of quiet, and the giving up everything, but one, in the wide world, to attain it. The one thing excepted was the one thing he should have given up first; but this he never thought of. It was his wife, Bella.

He was as meek as a mouse, but with a soul so small that a mouse would have been ashamed to be caught in a good-sized trap with it. He would not have dared to nibble cheese, while there was a cat left in Christendom. He would have preferred dying, half a grain a day; anything for a quiet life.

When he had put on his hat to go to his whist-club for the evening, he was desired to take it off again. Well, quiet was everything to him; so he sat down opposite his wife to hear the maid-servant rung for every five minutes to be fresh scolded.

When clad in a new sable suit, just ready to attend the remains of his relative to their last quiet home, he was desired to array himself again in his brown and drab, stay where he was, put some coals on, and keep his feet off the fender. Mrs. Pax "could never see, for her part, why a man should want to follow people to their graves, while he has a quiet home of his own." Well, compliance was easier than resistance; so down he sate, to be lectured in shrill tones, for the remainder of that day.

But there is always one bright spoke in Fortune's Wheel, and it comes round now and then; in Pax's case the bright spoke consisted in this: his wife was sometimes sulky, and wouldn't speak to him for days. "How providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!" he would cry. "What a blessing it is that even the

best of wives have a sulky fit occasionally; one has such a quiet time of it then!"

The life of Pax was, during many hours of the day, a cool and easy one, in a public office; his official duties were chiefly mechanical, and his mind was generally far away from his desk, deep buried in a monastic seclusion; dim, quiet, and monotonous. He envied the old monks; their repose was true rapture. To do nothing, and be undisturbed, uninterrupted all the while, was an existence more glorious than that of the gods; unless we except the supreme felicity pictured in the line of Keats:

"There sate old Saturn quiet as a stone."

Quiet, in the mind of Pax, had long been associated with "a stone;" but Bella was not destined to be laid under it yet. So home he daily went, to a tranquil abode, situated between a boarding-school for young gentlemen, and the residence of a "thorough bass" at the Opera. This house Mrs. Pax always refused to quit, because it afforded her the full enjoyment of these two nuisances, of which she approved when he complained, and complained (thus doubling the noisy evil) when he was silent. The thorough bass would have carried him off to the Opera on some occasions, but Bella opposed the proceeding, and, anything for a quiet life, Pax always stayed at home to be soundly "rated."

Plays of any kind pleased him but little. The comedies were too noisy; and the actors themselves laughed, instead of following the excellent example of the audience; while the tragedies were moving, and he liked everything quiet. Once, when the people applauded, the quiet little soul, not liking the noise, set up a "hish," which, being mistaken for a hiss, provoked a desperate assault upon him by a theatrical enthusiast

behind. By command of his wife, he had the enthusiast bound over to keep the peace. "Ah!" sighed Pax, "I wish his worship could bind *me* over, to *keep* it. Wouldn't I!"

Of course he never attended a public meeting, except a Quaker's. Of every species of *lusus naturæ*, the Agitator was the most anomalous to him. How people could delight in excitement, turmoil, and contention, to the total sacrifice of a quiet life, was as mysterious as to hear of fish enjoying the butter they are fried in. Nothing puzzled him more than such political convulsions as the Polish insurrection. Why could not Poles, he wondered, "take things easy," and remain in peace and tranquillity. He conjectured that people lived very quietly in Siberia.

To the Chinese war he was gently opposed, deeming it lamentable that a breach of the peace should have arisen out of the question of opium; a thing which, if taken in sufficient quantities, was calculated to make people extremely quiet. He gave himself no concern about the matter, but he used to wish, as he passed through the streets, that the mandarins in the grocers' shops would keep their heads still.

His favourite story-book was "Robinson Crusoe;" although he thought it a pity that Friday should ever have escaped, to interrupt the course of the solitary's remarkably quiet life. His pet poem was the "Prisoner of Chillon," who passed his time, particularly when he had the dungeon all to himself, very quietly.

It was Bella's pleasure, one day, that he should throw up his snug situation, and open a magnificent hotel at the terminus of a railway. Anything for a quiet life; and he ruined himself accordingly, with more expedition indeed than was strictly consonant with comfort.

After spending a few weeks in the hot season at Margate, to get a little repose, he began to undergo the exertion of thinking that something must be done to recruit his finances; that some slow, steady, tranquil avocation had become eminently desirable. But what should it be! When a boy, he used to think how he should like to be a London watchman; the watchmen led such quiet lives. But these, to the very last of the roses, were faded and gone; and as cad to an omnibus,—for one who along the "sequestered vale of life" would keep the "noiseless tenour of his way,"—there was small chance perhaps of uninterrupted felicity.

Happily, in this dilemma, a patron in the post-office proffered a carriership, and Bella determined that it was the very thing. Burthened with a full-sized packet of penny missives, the devotee of quit and ease went forth on his several daily rounds; but he had a tranquil little spirit, and a snail's pace; he had never hurried himself in his life, and hated loud knocks at the door; so he rapped with extreme gentleness, waited five minutes at every house, and then crept serenely on his way to deliver the next letter.

A large quantity accumulating daily on his hands, for want of time to complete his rounds, Bella insisted that he should not think of delivering them at all; they should be burnt. He almost ventured to protest audibly against this step, and he did look reluctant, but, anything for a quiet life, they were burnt upon the spot.

When he sneaked back into the noisy streets again, after his twelvemonth's imprisonment, the last month solitary, "Well," said he, in his small, calm way, "I must say I've had a very quiet time of it there. I'm so glad poor Bella got off."

Shortly after, with unexampled serenity, he took leave

of these turbulent shores, to settle tranquilly, and secure a quiet life, in a far-distant colony; forgetting, however, to leave his direction with his amiable wife. It would have been of no service to her; for the ship foundered, and Pax quietly went down with her, in the Pacific Ocean.

AN ESSAY—ON LEGS.

If we admit self-preservation to be the first law of nature, we must acknowledge that self-love stands as A 1. among the Affections.

Some degree of self-love, more or less, is at all events common, by common consent, to the children of men. But among man's *male* children, another rule holds good, and it is this: that the said self-love divides and subdivides itself into a multitude of little predilections and partialities, that settle upon some particular quality of the brain, or faculty of the body; so that in addition to one's proper and natural amount of affection, due to and diffused over one's entire self, we have branch-affections extending and belonging, and carrying especial liking and favour, to various distinct portions of our own organisation.

That one man, in addition to his stock of general and equally distributed self-love, cherishes a particular regard for some particular vice that forms part of himself, requires no vehemence of assertion. He loves that one disposition of his nature, because it is a manly vice, or a small tender vice, or a frank bold vice, or a vice that hurts nobody but himself (for it is astonishing how readily self-love reconciles itself to self-injury), or because it is a pleasant vice, or a profitable one, or one that is less shabby than his neighbour's. He has his favourite

aversions too, as well as his favourite attachments. This is admitted.

Admitted, too, that another man, equally self-loving, has as fond and exclusive a partiality for some especial virtue that belongs to him. He is fond of it perhaps for its own sake, perhaps because it happens to be *his* (for he might not have admired it in another); or because its maintenance through life has cost him something; or because it has brought him some credit and renown; a value-received virtue. He is proud of his humility, he frankly brags of his candour, he is intoxicated with a sense of his exemplary sobriety. All this is undeniable.

At the same time, it is perfectly intelligible. We may openly proclaim the hatred we cherish, and, according to Johnson, get liked for it: we may secretly nurture an overweening regard for any stray virtue we may chance to possess; we may encourage a partiality for any small talent that may be ours over other talents as surely our own, and of infinitely more importance; that is to say, a man who is great at chiseling a statue, may take a more particular pride in being famous for cutting out paper-likenesses with scissors; and one who is confessedly able in debate, may like much better to be told that he dances well. There have been philosophers, who would have been less pleased with the tribute, "You reason wisely," than with the compliment, "You sing like a gentleman."

Extol some great lawyer for unerring judgment, and profundity of knowledge, and he may listen unmoved; but praise his taste in wines, and you pour delight into his very soul. There was a great comedian who felt no pleasure in the laughter he everywhere raised; but if you told him that his whist playing was perfect, you made him happy for a week.

These examples of the little wayward partialities in which self-love indulges are, as we have said, intelligible enough. Not equally so are those that extend to, and settle upon, some particular organ of the animal frame which each man owns; some feature of the face, some limb of the body natural.

Yet what so common as instances of this species of favouritism; rather should we not say, what so universal as these predilections?

Go where we will, among the sublime of the earth or the ridiculous, among the beautiful or the ordinary, the gray-headed or the flaxen-haired; take all degrees from Hyperion to Caliban; and what is to be seen but ever-varying examples of this same favouritism settling upon limbs and features in which nobody but their owners ever perceived any distinguishing mark, not possessed by other limbs and features of their class.

Self-love, however it may love the *all* of self, loves some one bit of it better than the rest. It is the most volatile of affections, until it has once fixed itself; and then it never after stirs from the spot. It will cling to the little finger of the right hand; it will settle on the great toe of the left foot; it will hang upon an eyebrow; it will take up its everlasting rest, astride, upon the bridge of a nose.

Seeing the places where this most perverse and whimsical feeling of preference makes its selection and takes up its abode, it is not too absurd to suppose that a man may be suspected of cherishing a particular partiality for the nape of his neck. He may not be vain of his high forehead, nor of his broad chest, nor of his well-turned feet; but he may think there *is* something not unhandsome, about the nape of his neck.

The hand, wheresoever regarded as an index to birth,

the symbol of a fair descent, may have some show of reason for any preference accorded to it; but the preference should attach to both hands equally, and should not be cultivated beyond the aristocratic boundary. The partiality should by no means be extended to the Legs.

The Legs are not supposed by the most liberal in such matters, to be safe guides to a knowledge of birth and breeding. Yet in the race of partiality, the Legs carry off the prize, beating every rival hollow.

Whiskers, it is true, amongst the great body of men-children, are very formidable competitors. There are men who care nothing about the finest crop of raven curls that ever figured in a novel or a hairdresser's window; who don't care about broad shoulders, who have no peculiar taste for small hands, who can do very well without white dazzling teeth; but who *do* confess, in the face of the whole world, to a *penchant* for whiskers.

The love of whiskers, in some natures, is intense. As the cataract did by Lord Byron, they haunt people like a passion. A passion for the mustache has been known to sprout up rather stiffly, but will never bear comparison with the partiality excited by the whisker. Civilised man, in some districts of society, would give his eyes themselves to save his whiskers; but legs outstrip them, nevertheless.

How then does the case stand? We see men, very average sort of people, with no more self-love or vanity than falls to the common lot, entertaining a violent affection for some especial portion of their own animal frames. Some look with partial eyes upon the left hand, some upon the right foot; some invest the whole strength of their weakness in the hair, the preferences of another cling to his nose; while one, whom we lately

encountered, possessing brilliant eyes, a fine mouth, engaging manners, and goodly talents to sustain all, was vain of nothing upon earth but his ears; the donkey!

But far stronger, far more general and more lasting, than any of these preferences, is the preference which Man evinces for his Legs. There are persons who cannot get on in life in consequence of the surpassing excellence of their legs. Whenever they attempt to move, their legs are in the way. They may be said to be always stumbling over their legs, or to be trying to walk through the world with their legs uppermost.

It must be granted that persons who possess legs of the class to which the epithet "queer" is ordinarily applied, may at first find a little difficulty in making their way in the world. We see legs sometimes that appear to have been designed (appropriately enough) by Cruikshank. It might be imagined that they had been originally picked up, tied in a natural double knot, about the time of the deluge; having "neither the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man." They are past the aid of padding, and the miracle is how boots were ever fitted to them by the genius of cobblery.

Yet even in one of these extreme cases, there is no permanent difficulty, no real impediment to life's progress. The possessor of these queer appendages, compared with which the rudest branch of a cork-tree were symmetrical, soon becomes used to them. As he glances down at his person he sees nothing in the remotest degree resembling legs, and he forgets that he has such things about him. He is only conscious of possessing something not too shapeless to shuffle on with; and so on he shuffles. Awkward and ugly as they are, those legs bear him without tripping. Far happier he than the Hero of the Handsome Legs, the owner of those precious pets that are always playing at cross purposes,

by getting in their master's way, and carrying him into a fool's paradise.

Who knows not one such hero of a fool's paradise? Philosophers have held much disputation about the residence of the soul, while retained prisoner in the body. It has been settled that the dancing-master's is in his toe, and the lawyer's in his tongue; that one man's is in the palm of his hand, and another's buttoned up in his breeches pocket. Our hero's, past all doubt, lurks in his legs.

There is in them a superior consciousness, not common to the remainder of his corporeal substance. They are more than his better half. You might throw his head and heart into one scale, but his legs would never kick the beam in the other. He is disgusted when he hears the term "legs" applied to scamps and vagabonds. In his estimation they are the very "quintessence of dust,"

The precious porcelain of human clay.

Were he a swan with two necks, instead of a goose with one, he would consent to break both rather than fracture either of his pets. How he looks upon them, fondly and admiringly, at night and morning!—also at noonday and in his dreams! When are they out of sight or out of mind? They are as "the ocean to the river of his thoughts;" all his sympathies run into his legs, and looking at them,

He sees as from a tower the end of all.

His own lower extremities are, in his eyes, the termination of human nature; the boundary of the sublime and beautiful, the pillars and supports of mortal felicity. L. E. L. has said, with equal simplicity and force,

Only by looking up can we see Heaven;

our hero accomplishes this feat by opposite means,

and sees Heaven every moment by looking down, at his legs.

The only consideration that detracts in some degree from his supreme satisfaction, is, that but two legs are allotted to man. He envies the centipede, in respect to number, but in no respect would he condescend to envy a two-legged Hercules or Apollo. He pities, though they be but carvings on wood, or plaster images, the heads that have nothing subjoined to them but a pair of shoulders with wings branching from them, no legs. He declares that, without his legs, he should feel forlorn and destitute as a constituent body deprived for corruption of two "honourable members." He might better compare himself, if in that condition, to the parliamentary body, dissolved. Take away his "honourable members" and he himself would be gone; with the exception, perhaps, of a hat and coat.

Yet it must not be understood that our hero of the legs does not wear a head or bear arms; he does, but his sense of the existence of these is merged in his sense of the life which is in his legs. He lives for them, not they for him. It is they alone that give him standing in society, and he lavishes kindness upon them accordingly.

There is no indulgence of which legs are susceptible that they enjoy not; superior silk hose, faultless imaginables, and boots fit for a seraph. He toasts them at firesides, and stretches them at full length on sofas. Wherever he may happen to be, his legs are sure to be thrust out conspicuously, like a pigeon's through the pie-crust. You *must* see his legs before you can see him.

Whatsoever he may appear to be looking at, his eye is in reality on them. No matter what the subject may be on which you are conversing with him, his legs

are manifestly in his mind, crossing its narrow space, backwards and forwards, at full strut. You are fresh, it may be, from Rome, and are eloquent in your expatiation upon the magnificence of St. Peter's. There is a rising pleasure in his face as you are speaking; his imagination seems to be sympathising with yours; and there is a delightful enthusiasm in his tone, as, while his eye glances down his well-dressed leg, he exclaims, "It is indeed a noble structure!"

There may be samples of the short-sighted fraternity who never saw beyond their noses; our hero's vision is not so bounded; he always sees his legs before him, picture what steeples, towers, and pyramids you will.

"A splendid calf!" he exclaimed, placing his leg in a graceful rest, as we asked him whether he had heard our favourite statesman make his celebrated speech; and when we told him how his excellent lady-mother had fainted in church that morning, "Capital," cried he, surveying his legs in their new attire; "capital; I never had such a prime fit."

But although we preserve the plural "legs," it must not be imagined that our hero, vast as is his affection for both, loves them in exactly equal proportions. No, his right is his favourite leg. He slaps it, pats it rather, with an extra touch of tenderness, three times to the other's twice. He prefers his left to anything, *except his right*, in the wide universe.

Were he by some unlucky mischance, wandering on forbidden ground at midnight, to be caught by the leg, by the right leg, in a mantrap! But the imagination recoils aghast from a picture so horrible.

It excites no terror to fancy eagles picking at him, for he has no partiality for his eyes. A vulture gnawing his liver may be contemplated with composed nerves, for he takes no pride in it. A sharp spiked collar, or

an iron glove too tight, would present a spectacle of pain if fastened on some people; but he is totally unconcerned about his throat, and sets no value upon his fingers. Leave his legs alone, and you cannot injure him. A scrap of a dog nibbling at even his *left* calf, would conjure in his brain an image of greater terror than a tiger springing upon his shoulder.

What if the fell monster Gout should seize on one of those twin-perfections, on his favourite limb, his pet prodigy! Could he put in leg-bail to answer for his appearance afterwards?

The future, with its train of terrible possibilities, must not be thought of; enough that his legs are ever-present, and that (*ex pede Herculem*) by his leg he is known. Until Time shall tell him that he has not one to stand upon, he smiles defiance at calamity.

A man with handsome legs is no doubt, in his march through life, marvellously impeded by their beauty; but on the other hand, he has a double stock of pleasure: first, in admiring his own, and next in quizzing the queer ones. He has no definite recollection of any man's physiognomy, but he can swear to the legs that he has seen only once, and that in a crowd.

"Look at this fellow before us," he cries; "just look; did you ever see such a monster?"

"Why, his nose is rather red, to be sure; but I see nothing remarkable."

"In his face? Oh! I haven't looked at his face; look at his legs!"

You ask him on another occasion, how he liked the new Falstaff?

"Not much," is the answer; "the man acts the character superbly, his humour is exquisite, and his eye says all that the tongue cannot say, but his legs are anything but first-rate; and it strikes me, do you know,

that he had been tampering with them; to speak plain English, *stuffing*."

"I confess," he says another time, "to a decided aversion to the cabinet-minister you mention, an insuperable aversion; I never liked the look of his legs."

"I met Z. last night," you remark, "and without being uncharitable, I must say that man has no heart."

"No heart!" he exclaims; "my dear sir, you are too charitable by half. No heart! Why, the man has *no legs!* Did you ever see such things as he scrambles about upon?"

He admits Mr.—— to be a very fine speaker, but still thinks it a sad pity that such a man should ever "get upon his legs" in public.

There is one point upon which he is rather anxious in his inquiries. He asks everybody he meets, if they happen to have been in America, whether it is true that people in the theatres there, sit in the dress-boxes with their legs hanging over the front. He thinks it must have an odd look to persons accustomed to sit boxed-up as in England, and to hide their legs in society by tucking them as far as they can under the chairs. "To be sure," he adds, "some folks have a very good reason for it, not being so well able to afford the exhibition of their legs to the gaze of a pit-full of critics."

He has often had thoughts of paying a visit to the United States himself. He believes the whole story to be false, spirit and letter; or else, he observes, the Americans ought to be a fine-legged set of fellows.

He despises the Turkish costume, as denoting a total want of moral courage, as involving a cowardly concealment of limb: but he thinks Solon a great fool for not wearing trousers in the elderly stage, and Englishmen far wiser for getting rid of their "tights." He considers

that the Roman gave but a poor proof of courage and fortitude in thrusting his hand into a pan of burning coals; true courage would have consisted in putting his foot in it. He looks upon the man who has lost a well-turned leg defending his country, as having made the noblest sacrifice that patriotism is capable of; but he wonders extremely how any one possessed of a favourite leg, shattered as it might be, could ever consent to have it taken off. "Around the dear ruin" his affections would twine themselves like a bandage. He regards the mutilated warrior, stumping along on two bits of wood, as on a footing only with the great majority of his fellow-men, whose legs, tramping about town, are, as he can plainly discern, much of the same shape and substance; but of all the legs lost at Waterloo, not one, he is persuaded, could have replaced in its pride and symmetry the least perfect of his own.

The individual glory of loss may be great, but not equal to the national glory in the possession of one matchless pair. He intends to bequeath them, at his death, to an admiring country, provided always that the gift shall neither be derisively called a legacy, nor lamented in a hackneyed elegy.

THE THIEF OF TIME.

And then he swore
To leap the Pyramids, but *put it off*.—THE WAGER.

POETRY might be stigmatised as the "Thief of Time," with as much justice as Procrastination. How many nights and days has it stolen of mine! Dr. Young alone has filched from me, at various seasons, a choice

little collection of valuable hours, to say nothing of sundry scraps of broken mornings, and little bits of intervals, not bigger than a minute, every now and then, lost in heedless quoting or inconsiderate reflection. Yet this same reverend poet (one of his two professions might have taught him better) must needs hold up to perpetual obloquy a quality quite as honest as his own poetical craft, merely because it can't keep its hand long out of Time's hour-glass, but picks it of a sand or two pretty often, as the old stroller pushes through the crowd.

Procrastination was always a pet quality of mine. I have kept it in sharp practice ever since that now distant hour, when the first of my school-lessons was pitilessly set me: and as men may come at length to feed pleasantly on poisons, and to enjoy, like the last of the brothers in Chillon's dungeon, companionship with mice and spiders,—so may a bad quality, industriously exercised during half a lifetime, become an object of the most tender affection.

Moreover, there is one maxim upon which wise men always act, and it is this; when it is absolutely impossible to get rid of a vice, they comfort their consciences by arguing for it as a virtue.

Procrastination, be it vice or virtue, is not so common to all the world as all the world supposes. Few persons know how thoroughly to enjoy it. They only procrastinate with their business; they never dream of procrastinating with their pleasures; thus leaving unexercised the better half of the principle of procrastination. Any idler or blockhead can with ease postpone a matter of business: but rightly to understand how to defer his pleasures, tasks the faculties of a philosopher.

Pleasures are always the sweeter for being put off, just as venison is the better for being kept. I like my

pleasures *high*, as the gentleman did who got drunk on the Monument.

You may observe an epicure, how he wantons with a choice morsel before he devours it, shaping it tenderly with his knife, coaxing it as it were with his fork, humouring it with a multitude of little touches, all indicative, and at the same time provocative, of extreme relish; how gradually it becomes impregnated with the properties that "give delight and hurt not;" how he vivifies it with infinitesimal ministrations of salt, two grains at a time; how, in short, he lingers in pleasing dalliance with a bit of green fat,

"With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay."

Behold, moreover, the true lover of wine: is he ruthlessly bent on

"Tearing his pleasures with rough strife?"

Does he spring upon his prey, like a tigress upon a planter? See him, how he pauses; how he tastes it with his eyes; how he inhales its fragrance, physically as well as spiritually; with what felicity he procrastinates, with what art he postpones his delight only to heighten it! No drop of that precious draught, subtle inspirer, touches his lips, until he is in a suitable frame of mind. The imagination, the gusto, the life of life must be awake, or you might as well pour the sparkling liquid over the palate of a sleeping man.

As in free countries a cat may look at a king, so may any king take lessons from a cat. Watch her with a mouse newly captured. How she prolongs her enjoyment by postponing its climax. How she lets her captive go, and then makes him prisoner again. How she resists the eager promptings of appetite, and devours not, though she may, playing, humouring, in short, procrastinating, and at last administering the fatal *coup*

de grâce, with a reluctance that adds a zest to the treat. The lesson this teaches is, that even if we had nine lives, instead of one, pleasures are never plentiful enough to be wasted; to be snapped up all at once, in an instant; consumed extravagantly, in haste, and upon the spot; instead of allowing them to remain within reach for a time, to ripen on the sunny side of the imagination; thus making the most of a rarity.

But there is an old saying, "You may play with your mouse till you lose it." True, procrastination overmuch is very apt to spoil pleasure. No man is advised to let his haunch hang for a whole year, or to take a quart of brandy for a whet.

Be it known, however, that in any case, save that in which pleasure may happen to be concerned, procrastination in excess is as likely to prove beneficial, as in that one instance it is calculated to be injurious.

There is a class of duties that stand between what are properly called the pleasures of life and its regular business. Such for example is the duty of inditing suitable replies to friendly and family epistles; sheets-full of chit-chat from the seaside, or loving inquiries from kind old souls in odd nooks of the country. Now here let me own myself a good hater. If there be a detestable duty on earth, it is this one; and the penny postage presses it upon us all with peculiar severity. It is not only a duty hateful in itself, but it is more so by reason of the seeming absence of excuse for neglecting it. To think that the "letters Cadmus gave," should be employed to answer letters!

Luckily, of all tasks it is one of the easiest to postpone. You have only to sit down, with writing-desk at hand, taking care to *do nothing,* and the evil is at once avoided. Just sit down one of these fine days, and say quietly to yourself, "I ought to write to Mr.

This, and also to Mrs. That," and you will find your morning slip away in soothing languor and a comfortable indolence. Next day another friendly letter comes; and then two more epistolary blessings, long ones, crossed; when procrastination at once becomes not a choice, but a necessity. It is clear that you cannot write off such an arrear, if you were to try, and yet try you certainly will, in the evening, or perhaps to-morrow. But by this time, the cause for procrastination, which was strong before, has become stronger; and thus the longer you defer the discharge of your duty, the more complete is your vindication.

Not that you are really neglecting your friends and relatives after all; for you are always thinking of them. By not answering their letters, you draw them yet closer to you; they haunt you hourly; they come rapping at the door of your memory every few minutes, presenting letters for answers, like bills for payment; they are with you as you walk, whispering their requests for your note of hand at a short date; they return home with you to remind you that you owe them a "duly-received" and a "truly-obliged;" they dun your conscience to death until they get it; and supernatural postmen are sent to give a hard double-knock at your head, ever and anon, in the night-time. It is impossible to neglect such excellent correspondents; for (by the way) by the strangest of contradictions, I have observed that those who write very frequently, and make their letters very long, are invariably regarded as "excellent correspondents." Now one would have thought, on the contrary; but this is a digression.

The beauty of it all is, that unless you grow impatient of postponement, and foolishly terminate your fit of procrastination a little too soon, you will find that these letters have either answered themselves in some

way, or survived the necessity for any answer at all. Procrastination, therefore, on some occasions, not only effectually puts off the evil day, but actually blots it out of the calendar. He must be a fool, who, when sentenced to be hanged, would not get a reprieve if he could; because he might break out of prison, or cheat his prosecutor by dying a natural death—from indigestion, or the fatigue of receiving visitors.

There are cases, however, by hundreds, in which duty and pleasure are very often combined; such as in paying debts, and visits, and getting married. People procrastinate on these points; but it is the sense of postponing a duty that moves them; for, as it has been hinted before, an unmixed pleasure they know not how to defer. If the payment of a debt were a pure and simple act of enjoyment, like eating ices in the dog-days, there are persons alive who would probably be more punctual; but it is held to be also a duty, as Mr. Weller conceives it to be the duty of bank-clerks to eat sandwiches; and accordingly they procrastinate.

They procrastinate likewise in the matter of paying visits, when they esteem the payment to be a duty; but then they postpone the conclusion of the visit, they defer the hour of their departure, on exactly the same grounds. They only procrastinate because they feel it to be their duty; "their going might break up the party;" "it would be an offence to other visiters;" "it would be an ungrateful return for hospitality;" and they considerately, in the most self-sacrificing manner, lengthen their stay, and procrastinate, out of a sense of duty, to the last.

As for marriage, the old bachelor may appear to some the pink of procrastinators; but it is not so: and for the selfsame reason that procrastination rarely defers its pleasures. The bachelor, in nine cases out of ten, is

one, and remains one, not because he has been procrastinating with marriage, and postponing the happy day until it can never arrive, but because he has been too eager in his efforts to cast off his bachelorship. He is a bachelor, not because he delayed his offers too long, but because he has made twenty that never were accepted.

Who does not perfectly well understand, that every bachelor of fifty has been judiciously refused at least five times? Instead of supposing that he never made an offer of his hand, suppose with great truth that he has made a goose of himself altogether.

He has seen a fascinator of seventeen, an enchantress of twenty, an angel of twenty-three, a goddess under thirty, and a divinity, fat, fair, and something else; and to each has he opened his mouth, almost as soon as he opened his eyes. He modestly assumed, in every case, that there was a heart to let for a single gentleman, furnished; and of course he had a decided "No" from the lady's lips, which was equivalent to the door being slammed in his face; and a glance of scorn from a pair of eyes over which the fair lids immediately dropped in disdain, which was equivalent to the blinds being drawn down.

No, no; never conclude that the old bachelor has been a procrastinator. It were a culpable excess of charity to regard him as a waiter upon Providence, a hanger-on upon the skirts of life, a loiterer by the wayside, content to wait and be picked up by the compassionate.

Call him an offshoot of antiquity, a mateless nonentity, one of the odds-and-ends of humanity, the fossil remains of an animal happily extinct, part of a lot knocked down at the fall of Nineveh, a piece of mortal stuff thrown aside as of no use when mortality was

fashioned, a scrap of waste clay set walking, a chip of the fag-end of the Ark; say all this, and in most instances it will be gross flattery.

Depend upon it, the case generally is, as it has just been stated. It is not that he has never had the courage to "pop" the question; it is, that he never had the mingled wit and modesty to "pop" it properly.

The man who really procrastinates in the affair of marriage, rarely dies a bachelor, although double-blessedness may visit him rather late in the day.

This is one of the few cases in which the procrastinator dallies with his pleasures, finding delight in their delay, enjoying their very postponement. But defer the critical occasion as he may, it will come; the offering must be made, the acceptance must be sealed. The ground on which he has entered is so beset with springes; so filled with surprises, persuasives, and allurements; with soothing coercion, and desire mixed with dread of captivity, that off his guard he must be caught at some time. He may fight shy, or feel reluctant, and fancy himself free as air; all this for years; but in a moment, when least expected, in the midst of his illusion, when his dream of liberty is most flattering, sweet, and substantial too; lo! he finds himself seated, apparently on a down-pillowed settee, but really on the horns of a dilemma; seemingly on a daisied-bank, but virtually on thorns; encircled in a fairy-bower, yet driven into an awkward corner, with Nature crying aloud through all her works in an imperious, yet insinuating voice, asking him, "What his intentions are?" No; procrastination may defer the capture, but it cannot provide the escape.

We must turn to the procrastinator in the affairs of business; and business includes lawsuits; but these would lead us into a lane that has no turning. Pro-

crastination dies, of sheer inanition, before it comes to the end of it.

A grand mistake which men of business constantly commit, consists in their setting about it as a thing that cannot be postponed.

"Business that admits of no delay," is a description of every business they are engaged in. They would deliver procrastination bound hand and foot into the custody of the police, and transport the innocent for life. But how often might that Thief of Time have saved them from the consequences of dishonesty! In their horror of postponement, they pack up the goods and send them off; discovering, the next hour, that the customer, now in possession of the prize, is an arrant cheat. They hasten to bid in the public auction, and buy the wrong lot. They fly, lest the golden opportunity should be lost, and break their necks.

Such is their abhorrence of procrastination, that they run headlong, and without once stopping, into the Gazette. The moral, that speaks volumes in favour of this much-abused principle, is heard continually in the exclamation, "It's done now, and can't be helped." But it might have been, had not promptitude put aside all precaution.

It is all very well to hit the iron while it's hot; but suppose the iron afterwards enters into your soul, is it any comfort to recollect that you hit it the instant it was out of the fire?

"Act in haste and repent at leisure," "They stumble who run fast," &c., are maxims well remembered in business, but seldom reserved for practical use. Any mischief, the result of undue speed, is forgiven, rather than the seemingly unnecessary delay, which may after all have shown the work itself to be needless, as well as the speed. Any habit but procrastination may

obtain pardon; and yet this habit, if it have missed many opportunities of making a fortune, has saved many a fortune from being untimely swallowed up.

If these men of business could push their steam-engines on at a rate so rapid, that the boilers would not have time to explode, they might succeed better; but meanwhile, to avoid dilatoriness, they rush upon destruction. They know perfectly well that a great deal more evil in business arises from over-confidence than from over-caution; and yet their advice is, shun procrastination at all risks.

The only pleasure business ever brought me, was the exercise of a "free-born Englishman's" privilege of postponing it as long as I could; and never was it worse executed at last, for being then imperative upon me, and the instant result of the inward settled conviction, "Now it *must* be done."

The spur supplied by that necessity, often insures a steady, as well as a speedy, leap over every difficulty.

But procrastination must not be partially patronised; if adopted at all, it must be followed out as a principle of your nature. It will not do to defer a point of business simply because it is disagreeable, which would be a dangerous sanctioning of Barnardine's whim, in objecting to get up and be hanged;—business, to be safely delayed, must be delayed because it *is* business. Otherwise, one would procrastinate here, and another there, and a stoppage would be the result, for the want of a general understanding and the observance of a rule. But make the rule universal, and where is the inconvenience? I promise a prompt attention, and you know that I shall procrastinate. I postpone the performance of my engagement, and you defer your expectation to a distant day. All thus is as well as ever. When you know (as I have remarked on another

occasion), that a man will *not* keep his word, when you can rely on his disappointiug you; the convenience is as great as when you can place confidence in his punctuality.

The true procrastinator will never give you much trouble. He stirs, when he can stand still no longer. You are sure of his help, when he cannot help himself. There is also an advantage in knowing what he will *not* do. If you have given him provocation, resenting his delays, he will scarcely call you out within a twelvemonth, when his anger will have cooled. If he write to complain, he will never put the letter in the post. If he meditate a pamphlet against you, he will never get beyond the title-page. In the end, his memory, much musing, but sleeping half its time, will grow confused; and he will begin to doubt whether you cruelly injured him, or he you.

His impression will probably be, that he has acted very shamefully; and ought to have apologised. He will then talk of shooting himself; but will die quietly of old age, before he can decide upon the respective claims of hair-triggers and the New River.

HAVING ONE'S OWN WAY.

WHO, that has looked upon the world "for four times seven years" (which one's wife calls five at least), has ever, throughout that period, discovered more than one way that he ardently desired to have, or could conscientiously think worth having? Of course, the one way is one's own way. For my part, I never wanted any other; but I have invariably wanted that. Now that happens to be exactly the way that people, of whatsoever degree, will never let you have if they can

help it. You may have theirs if you will, and welcome; they endeavour with all their soul and with all their strength to persuade you to have it; nay, you may pick from a profusion; but you must not have your own way. The world is all before you where to choose, so that your choice fall not on the sole object that you thirst for, the one thing you want,—that one thing happening of all others upon earth to belong to you by right, to be emphatically *your own.*

The world is singularly consistent in its inconsistency. Every individual atom in society is duly impressed with a conviction of the privilege and the pleasure of having its own little way, while it is immoveably fixed in a resolution to let no fellow-atom secure that requisite and natural indulgence. "I don't care, I will have my own way," says every man to himself. "Now, don't be so obstinate, don't insist upon having your own way," is the cry of every man to his neighbour.

I hate obstinacy as I hate egotism. I never could bear unnecessarily to oppose myself to the wishes of other people. I blush like a lobster when I get into hot water. But at the same time, though the most docile and tractable creature alive, I always said from my very cradle, and I always shall say it, "What is the use of other people's ways to me? Let me always have my own; I never ask for more, and won't be satisfied with less." If there's anything unreasonable in this, let the reader tell me so at once, and I'll discuss the point with him when we meet. I was always a friend to free discussion. I'm of opinion with Mr. Croaker, in some play that I once saw, that there's no objection to argument when you have finally made up your mind, because reason can then do no harm.

I had hardly crept out of the cradle just adverted to, when I began to give proofs of that independent turn of

mind, the self-acting principle of my disposition, which I am now laying claim to as being almost all that I can positively call my own; the more reason you will say why I should value it as I do, and take pride in the possession of it. It has cost me something, I 'm sure, and ought to be worth bragging of, but I never boast. Why should you? you will ask in the sequel.

Poor old Wheezle! If she were alive, wouldn't she remember the day? It was my fourth birthday, and there was a general conspiracy all through the house to make me comfortable and happy. They were all, I believe, very fond of me. Indeed, I have generally observed that spirited children who show signs of having a will of their own; who won't submit to be quietly trained up in the way they should go, like young rabbits; who are not afraid to squall, and can kick for themselves as it were; are much more apt to attract notice, and to be petted and indulged by the people about them, than children of a meeker and less impatient temper. It fared so with me, at all events; for I had always ten times as many toys, sweetmeats, and holidays, as my brother, who was too meek and mute to disturb a mouse, and who would, with surprising readiness, and as I sometimes thought with real, but certainly with apparent pleasure, do exactly at all times what he was told to do, instead of the reverse, which ever seemed so natural to me. It happened, at any rate, on this birthday of mine, that all hands were busied in supplying materials for a grand nursery festival. It was all arranged; I was to go out in the morning, receive company when I came home, and be allowed to make myself almost as ill as I liked. But somehow all this displeased me. I got up in an ill humour, and as I liked it, I kept in it throughout the day. I was very fractious, undoubtedly, as boys will be. They

had all resolved that I *should* be happy, and I remember that I could not bear the sense of control, I could not bear that they should have their way, and I not have mine. So they were all thwarted, for I would neither go out nor see my visiters, and lest I should break a bloodvessel, or my father's afternoon nap, my mother ordered that I should "have my own way." Poor Wheezle, she did humour me, to be sure! All day long I led her such a life, and she never crossed me in anything. At last having scattered or torn up all my books and prints, my eyes rested upon a splendid volume (one of Hogarth's) of which I had once or twice caught a glimpse, and which I now resolved to finger. I screamed for it, but in vain. Wheezle was not an ill-natured woman, but she was just one of those persons who will cheerfully render you ninety-nine services, and then refuse the hundredth if it does not suit them to grant it. Now it was this hundredth that I wanted, and certainly I *did* roar. Any book but that I might have; dozens were offered, but there could be no substitute; I screamed and stamped. Few boys are fully aware of what screaming and stamping will effect, if duly persevered in. My mother came as before, "Let him have his way, his father says he may have the book." And then observing, perhaps, that I was standing rather close to the fender, she quitted the room with a maternal direction, "Take care he doesn't play with the fire."

Now it so happens that I had never thought of such a thing as playing with the fire. Of all the mischievous expedients which I had that day hit upon, playing with the fire had never crossed my mind. Here was a discovery! Playing with the fire must be pleasant under any circumstances; but playing with fire when care was to be taken that I did not! who could resist, that

loved to have his own way? The book instantly lost its charms, but I was quiet as I turned over its leaves; and fatigued to the utmost, so as to be completely overcome by the sudden change from tumult to tranquillity, my old attendant began to doze. I seized the opportunity, tore two or three of the prints out of the splendid volume, set light to them, and flung them blazing upon the fender; so that, watching the expiring sparks, I could enjoy the sport which children call "seeing the people out of church." From that hour I date the formation of my character. Until the day when I was full four years of age, I had no guiding principle, no fixed purpose. I then conceived the glory of having one's own way, and I had it. To be sure, on repeating the flare with another handful of illustrious leaves, I set my frock on fire, and was found rolling on the rug in an agony; nor were the flames extinguished until I was so burnt as to be in imminent danger for weeks. My features to this day bear dreadful marks of the ravage, and my wife is every now and then fidgety lest the next boy should be like me. Still, it will be observed, I achieved my object; young as I was, I had my way.

The consequences, however, made me cautious, though not less resolved. Then I grew bigger, and became less circumspect. It was sufficient to warn me not to go upon the ice, to insure my being brought home by that punctual delivery company, the Humane Society. If I took it into my head to go to the play without parental permission, to the play I went, though it were to see my own father's tragedy damned; and if I had made up my mind to go to church, by the same rule I verily believe I should have gone. The temptation in such cases would naturally be rendered slight by the lack of opposition. If I could have my own way un-

opposed, I never found it particularly worth having. But resistance stimulated me to exertion, to stratagem, and almost invariably to success. I may give an example of the mode by which, very early in life, I contrived to accomplish my ends, trivial as they were. Endeavouring to engage a companion in the game known among boys as that of "playing at horses," I proposed to him "to be my horse." My reins of string were ready, but he doggedly refused. I pressed him to submit; he would not. I threatened, but I saw by his flashing eye and clenched fist that, though far inferior in strength to myself, force would be wholly unavailing, and that his obstinacy was invincible. Of course I didn't care about playing with the young scamp, but I had made the proposal, and "*my horse*" he must be. It became necessary to change the terms of the proposition, the object being exactly the same. "Well, then," I suggested, "I'm not particular; come, I'll be *your cart!*" To this he instantly consented, and I as instantly felt a flush of triumph all over my frame; for I saw in the slight circumstance, an example of the spirit in which opposition to my will must be met, and of the success with which craft may work out its purpose, and have its own way in the world. The little vagabond, though! He was very light of foot, and went off much too fast for me; so as he was running like a race-horse, and I, holding the reins, was chuckling at the thought of having *done* him, he dragged me over some loose stones, and before I could let go, down I came with a crash. My broken leg was skilfully set, but I feel pain in it even now, and limp confoundedly. Still, as you will again observe, I had my own way; and therefore I don't care much.

"Ah!" said my mother, as I lay ill, and seemingly

asleep, "if that boy had his own way, depend on it he'd come to be an emperor." And positively I think I should.

"How well things went on with Napoleon," thought I, reflecting upon this afterwards, "while he had it all his own way! but other people would insist upon having theirs, and then his troubles began." Every history I read told me the same story, and confirmed me in my resolution. All the great people—kings, conquerors, mighty churchmen, and potent ministers—they were prosperous and happy so long as they had their way, and were only exiled, poisoned, burnt, decapitated, or otherwise inconvenienced, when they had it no longer. What lessons for me to learn! what grand truths for me to reflect upon!

My boyhood did not disgrace my childhood, nor did my young manhood discredit my boyhood. Unluckily, however, out of the only three professions that a gentleman can follow I was obliged to make choice of the one which was hateful to me, my provident father and mother having, between them, hit upon the other two; each of this chosen two being deemed, by one or other parent, exactly suited to me, the very thing. I have always thought this exceedingly hard; and can never reflect upon the violent affection and anxious forethought of my two relatives alluded to, without strong resentment. If they had not persisted in recommending those pursuits for which I was qualified, and to which in truth my inclinations tended, one of those pursuits I should have fixed upon; as it was, I had no choice left, and, in the emergency to which their fondness had reduced me, I was of course compelled to adopt the wrong profession. It is impossible, however, to maintain one's independence without occasional sacrifices. In fact, rather than let other people have

their way, I would not, at the period I am speaking of, have scrupled to turn author, and disgrace my family.

But this wilfulness and perversity on the part of relations who, as usual, meant well, was fated to be my hindrance in a still more important proceeding of life. I must say that I have experienced great provocation and grievous injury, and nothing but a consciousness of having at last, by some means or other, had my own way, could console me under a sense of it.

There was a young lady; I was about to mention her name, but it is as well not; for if ever my wife should see this in print—

But to proceed. There was in our neighbourhood a fair young creature, a gentle, sensitive, and lovely girl, whom as a very child I had looked upon with eyes of boyish preference, and whose progress in the beautiful season of youth I had watched with a kind of half-conscious passion. To tell the truth, I am now fully convinced that I loved her; but of this I was not so sure then. How she felt towards me was perhaps somewhat uncertain too. That I was not indifferent to her I know; for once, when excessively annoyed at being very strictly enjoined, while in her presence, that was what I could not bear, strictly enjoined not to go near a surly mastiff whom I had plagued often enough, and was now chained up as dangerous; when, I say, I went up to the brute immediately, and got my arm terribly lacerated by him, I perceived that I had made *some* impression on her mind. Nobody I am very sure could scream more naturally, or look whiter with or without pearl-powder than she did; but afterwards, when she had recovered from the fright, there was an expression of dislike and reproach on her pretty, timid-looking face, which I could never exactly account for. It left me in doubt whether she entertained an aversion

for what she might have heard called my self-willed, headstrong character, or whether she rebuked me for having put my precious life in peril, and agitated her so cruelly. Probably, too, she felt that the cry of distress and terror she raised when the brute sprang upon me, proclaimed the existence (she was fourteen at that time) of a sentiment towards me too tender to be so incautiously and publicly revealed; for it is certain that from that hour she was rather more guarded than she had been before, more sparing of her little innocent smiles when we met, or perhaps I fancied it.

Another trifling incident, however, it may be as well to relate. It occurred a long time afterwards, and she witnessed it. Her brother and some other young horsemen had dared me to ride a mare that I had along a very awkward bit of road, four or five miles of it, with a leap or two to take, in so many minutes. They said I couldn't do it; I had said I could, and therefore I *would*; and so I *did*. But unluckily the mare's strength was unequal to the feat, and just as she came to the last leap I found the spur failing of effect. She tried it, for she was eleven points blood; but she hurt herself horribly, and her shoulder was dislocated, and so it was thought best to shoot her. Now among the eyes that witnessed this provoking misadventure were, by mere accident, two particularly blue and bright ones, that, as the mare came flying down the pitch, and dropped with me at the fence below it, I could see straining with all their power, and expressing quite as much pity and alarm as would satisfy most men that they were passionately beloved. Well, I was no sooner extricated (for I was not hurt), than turning round, there were those eyes, filled but now with beautiful fear and commiseration, closed as if in death, so that the poor dying mare seemed more alive than she did. Those few

moments of insensibility I did not soon forget; nor could all her black looks and cold words afterwards blind me effectually to the state of those feelings which must (I fancy) have caused the pitying gaze and the painful shudder as the crippled beast dropped under me. Poor girl, my danger was not so great as she doubtless thought it!

This occurred when we were about nineteen. A year or two later, on my return home from a three months' trip to the continent, which had afforded me abundant opportunities of comparing foreign beauty and foreign manners with hers, and of testing the reality of my passion, what was my disappointment, my concern, my thorough mortification, at finding that, during my absence, her parents and mine had regularly settled all the preliminaries of a match between us! They had, to my astonishment and dismay, finally arranged it as a thing that was positively to be; the fullest confidence and reliance being placed on her gentleness, that ever promised assent to the wishes of those who loved her, and on my long undisguised partiality, which of course seemed to threaten no opposition. In fact they had never dreamed of a difficulty; and if I had been an automaton-lover, a bridegroom to be pulled with wires at their will, they could not have made more sure of me. Never was I so enraged. The embarrassment, the bitterness, the irretrievable ill-luck of my position, must at once be seen. What added to the exasperating effect of this tyrannical arrangement was, that the instant it was mentioned, perceiving at once the ruin of my hopes, I felt my passion, but moderately warm before, blazing up with ungovernable fury. It was only in the moment of sacrifice that I finally found out *what* I sacrificed. Discovering that I loved in vain, I learnt how truly I loved. This I have always regarded as the

crowning hardship of my life. Here was I, adoring the girl to desperation, and reasonably hoping to prosper in my suit; in fact if I had once made up my mind to have her, mine of course she would and must have been; here was I, suddenly cut off from all possibility of a fulfilment of my fond desires by the fatal interference of four foolish old people, pre-arranging, pre-settling, and pre-ordaining matters, so that I must of necessity let them have their own way unconditionally, or, the alternative is self-evident, and I need not say that I unhesitatingly adopted it. I crushed their project of a marriage in six words. As far as memory serves, "If I do I 'll be" were five out of the half-dozen.

Only suppose that my father had providentially been opposed to this marriage, or that my mother even had violently objected to it, I might have brought myself to consent to such a compromise, for when a man's matrimonial happiness is the stake, he should 'nt unreasonably reject every mode of winning. But all such blessings of opposition were rigorously denied me. To me, no frantic threat of being severed from my patrimony through the medium of a shilling furnished the desirable stimulant; no maternal fits defying sal volatile impelled me to a union; no brother's blustering remonstrances against the match pleaded trumpet-tongued in behalf of my bride-elect; no sister's handkerchief of cambric tear-steeped, waved me onward, resolute to create the dreaded sister-in-law: but instead, there was a fixed confidence in every eye, a full conviction in every heart, that I had no choice, must consent, and indeed was eager beyond expression to show my obedience and accomplish all that they wished. Even with these obstacles, had there been a stout opposition in the lady's family, had her frantic brother hinted something about a latent inclination to call me out, or her stupid father been heard

to say after dinner that he should 'nt at all mind being hanged on my account; if I had been but once waylaid, or if they had sent her into Yorkshire out of my way, or starved her for six weeks in a garret; this would have been something, it might have altered the case. But it was a conspiracy of compliance; the families were united in one sentiment, or rather resolution; the very servants had set their hearts on the match. Fate had already drawn up the certificate. The chickens were all counted, and simply required hatching; the reckoning was all settled, only the host had n't been called in.

In one month after this I was married; not to the lady of *their* choice, but to a lady of mine. I had several times met, in the family of a fellow-student in town, a sort of counterpart to Beatrice in the comedy, only she was not at all handsome, nor could she be said to have the smallest pretensions to wit. But it so happened that on sundry occasions, morning calls and evening parties, we too had fallen to games of cross-purposes. She took especial delight in taunting and thwarting me; it could only be in trivial things of course, but they were enough to rouse resentment and provoke retaliation; so that whenever we met we were sure to quarrel bitterly with due politeness, and I believe hated each other with exceeding cordiality. The sympathy of aversion exhibited itself at our first meeting; we had hardly exchanged glances, when we detested one another.

Now, next to love at first sight, the danger of union exists in hate at first sight; indeed, the repelling quality often contains secretly the strongest power of attraction. A woman may love, and yet not necessarily marry you; but once get her to hate, and it is your own fault if she don't have you. A consciousness that I had triumphantly succeeded in this latter exploit, decided my

choice. Enraged and tortured by the wishes, the entreaties, and the prayers of all around me, I put a last and extinguishing "No!" upon the united proposals of the two families, started for town, rushed to my resource, proposed, remonstrated, upset all obstacles, scoffed at all resistance, had my own way, and was accepted!

After a short season of courtship, passed in pleasing squabbles, and interesting bickerings, with a stormy quarrel or two, that would have done no discredit even to wedded life, I woke up one morning in a chaise that was going to Twickenham, and found myself actually married!

The chaise I said was *going* to Twickenham; but as I like to be accurate, and hate insinuations, I shall frankly admit that it never got there. To tell the truth, my wife had a passion for Richmond, for the "Star and Garter," and to Richmond she would go, although every arrangement that heart could wish for had been made at Twickenham: close by, just a stone's throw off. She insisted that Twickenham was low and damp, and she worked me into a fever by her violent apprehensions about my rheumatism. Anything more aggravating is hardly conceivable; but as it was my marriage morning, as it had come to a skirmish, and as it was deucedly unpleasant to drive into an orderly village with *both* glasses of the chaise broken; I confess that I did yield the point: comforting myself with the reflection that she gained very little by the conquest; for the distance is nothing—between Richmond and Twickenham. I *almost* had my own way, you see!

The rest of the day was spent very agreeably; principally in silent but strenuous endeavours on my part, to reconcile my eyes and ears to my wedded lot; to fortify my mind with reflections upon the vanity and

evanescence of beauty, and to convince myself of the unendurable insipidity of a sweet temper.

"How mawkishly," ruminated I, "must my whole life have been passed, had I submitted to dictation and married Em—(if I wasn't just going to mention her name again; it runs confoundedly in my head!) How soon one grows tired of beauty (I proceeded), sighing for ugliness as a change! a feeling, surely, every bit as worrying and restless as that of wishing to exchange ugliness for beauty. Or granting that a man would never grow weary of a beautiful face, how acute must be his anguish at seeing the loveliness he worships fade away! If we desire no change, if we would avoid the pangs of disappointment, we should marry ugly, not handsome women; for beauty vanishes, *but ugliness never does;* there is the grand truth. Choose a wife for her beauty, it becomes daily less and less; choose her for her plainness, it becomes hourly more and more. Wise men, I am persuaded, always do what I have done; and at all events, I have had my own way. As for a sweet temper and a gentle disposition,—submissiveness is excellent when particularly wanted, but without a little dogged and inconsiderate resistance now and then, how is it to be borne with at all! I hate submission. How I should detest that walking-over-the-course sort of life, with nothing opposing me, nothing to achieve! There's that (well, never mind her name), if I had married *her*, she would have said 'Yes!' to every proposition I could have made. It would have been in vain to ask, for her assent would have been certain. I never could have had my own way, for she would instantly have made it *hers*. Wind and tide, quick tide, fair wind, for ever. Who could bear this? She would have let me beat her at backgammon when the game was hers, revoked at whist on purpose that I might

win. What's the use of one's own way had on these terms? No, no; save me, of all things, if I'm to live at all, from the timid, tender, inoffensive wife, who never was known to deliver a positive opinion in her husband's presence but once; and that was when, breaking a long silent pause in a scriptural discussion, she ventured in low and trembling accents to remark—'Samson was the strongest man!' If she had but said he *wasn't*, what a jewel of a wife would she have been, and what a long winter's evening might have been got rid of!"

This was a somewhat long soliloquy for a wedding-day! Yes, but then the day itself seemed long, and my object in soliloquizing, was to shorten it by arguing myself into happiness. I found that this required vast quantities of reason before it could be effected, and I continued my labour for several successive days, regardless of the consumption. But unluckily, just as I had finally convinced myself that obstinacy and contradiction are, when administered in certain proportions, to be classed among the essential elements of matrimonial felicity, I discovered that in my case the quantities were too large; that the remedy was less agreeable than the disease. Now of all good things, contradiction and obstinacy are those which it is extremely undesirable to have too much of—a truth that impressed itself more provokingly upon my mind every hour; as regularly, in short, as the dreary consciousness increased that a superfluity in that respect had really fallen to my lot.

"Too much of them," is not the fitting phrase; I had nothing else! Four-and-twenty hours had not elapsed when the fact stared me in the face; the question as to the second day's dinner ought to have made me see it. Train up a wife in the way she should go; that is, in your way, and when she is old she will submit to a

separate maintenance: that should have been my maxim. But unfortunately I began wrong, and continued wrong. My excuse is; we were at the "Star and Garter;" a very excellent hotel, but not one's own house. The ruinous, the fatal principle, "anything for peace and quietness," was too early forced upon me. Without grumbling, I must say that my fate has been one succession of hardships. Had we gone to Twickenham, or had the glass of that cursed yellow chaise been down that it might have escaped the smash; but it was to be, and it happened accordingly.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I have at any time, then or since, submitted to an arbitrary exercise of will, in blank opposition to my own; that I have been, to use a plain but unpleasant expression, henpecked, as it were. No, I couldn't stand that; nor, to do my wife justice, is she the woman to attempt it. What does the poet say?

"She, if she rules him, never shows she rules!"

My wife has hit upon this secret and invisible mode of government. Her iron rule is simply a persuader. Coercion with her, assumes the air of coaxing. You would absolutely think at first sight, that I have everything my own way; but the truth is, that—that I have *not*. She "loves" and "honours" me, according to her vow at the altar; but with so much intensity, that to "obey" is impossible. Such is her excess of affection, that it quite swallows up obedience. How natural it is to be discontented! When she hated me, I insisted upon her loving me; now, I should be supremely blessed if she would but hate me again. If she would openly tyrannise, and play the absolute monarch undisguised, my remedy would be easy; but this affectionate, plausible, irresistible despotism, is a yoke that it is just as

difficult to endure as to shake off; by which is meant, that it is perfectly impossible.

It isn't that she "o'erdoes termagant;" no, she underdoes it. With what uncontrollable and insinuating fondness does she interfere with all business, all pleasure, of mine; with whatsoever I say, and whatsoever I do! How winningly does she snatch away my hat when I want to go out, and how facetiously does she contrive that I shall not be solitary when I wish to be alone. Never, surely, was such devotion exhibited. She had rather that I stayed within doors for days together, than that I should quit the house unaccompanied by her. When I once told her that I should go out of my mind, her answer was,

"My dear, I shall insist upon going with you, for I'm sure you wouldn't be able to take care of yourself."

When had man such a physician before? My health is her hourly thought, and though there is nothing on earth the matter with it, it is throughout the year in a most precarious state. If I really had the half-dozen diseases that her acute apprehensions detect—to be more closely watched, or rigidly tended, would be impossible. She knows exactly when smoking is most injurious to me, and that is always at the very moment when I take my meerschaum. Her knowledge of the deleterious qualities of wines is just as remarkable. If my inclinations tend to port, madeira is peremptorily prescribed; and should I fancy madeira, toast-and-water, made very weak, is affectionately substituted. Strong eye-sight is an invaluable blessing; but what a bore to be prevented from making use of it in the library, lest it should ever be weakened by reading! There is not an author in the catalogue who is not remorselessly locked up just as I have a mind for his company; and my wife's facility at losing a key is hardly to be paralleled. My friends

are quite as effectually excluded as my books. She is pretty sure that one would lead me to the hazard-table and another to Tattersall's; this, she has reason to know, only seeks my friendship that he may borrow my acceptance either at two or three months; and the other is not a person fit for any married man to associate with, for he openly snubs his wife, and is rarely home before one in the morning.

But here some reader, blessed, unspeakably blessed, with a wife who doesn't care the shadow of a straw for him, interrupts me with, "Why don't you resist?" Resist! I could almost run through all the tenses of the verb; I resist, am resisting, and do resist; I did resist; I have resisted; I shall *and* will resist; but to what end, with what effect, how idly! Violence is easily combated, but devotion such as hers is invincible. One grievance I must especially complain of. While having everything exactly her own way, she is incessantly tracing to that very practice on my part all the evils that have ever befallen me. My shortened leg, my scarred visage, my stinted means and failing profession, are all produced as witnesses against my capacity for self-government, and in favour of my abiding by unexceptionable advice. The quarrels I have had, and especially certain expensive lawsuits into which I have been led (and into which people must often be led when they know they are in the right, and feel that they ought to have their own way), are cited as proofs of my rashness and inexperience; in other words, of my want of a wife to govern me. Inexperience! Yes, it is her apprehension on this score, that makes her, in whatever company we may be, add exactly five years to my age.

"People," she intimates, "do think you so young and inexperienced; so gay; I can't bear it."

These fictitious five raise me to about her own level.

And then, in the same spirit, though apparently contradictory, she wishes, looking in my face most likely the whole time, that the children may not resemble *me* as they grow up, for she must say she *should* like her boys to be reckoned handsome! The one that happens to have her nose, not much exaggerated, would bring me a fortune in shillings, if exhibited at the Egyptian Hall.

What a nose might he have had, if Em—Emily (there's the name at last); if *she* had been his mother! Three months after my sudden flight, she married my brother; he was just the person to conform to anybody's wishes. They all talked of the match as of a settled thing between the parties from childhood; a love-marriage, though the families never dreamed of such an attachment. It might be convenient to say this, the better to cover the awkwardness of my retreat, and account for the sudden transfer of the lady. There was, to be sure, a striking similarity in their manners and dispositions. A gentle pair, truly. Love! Well, all I can say is, that I never noticed a symptom of it; and I believe now, that if we were both free, and she were allowed to have her way, she'd have me!

Freedom is, however, out of the case. Nothing is so long-lived as slavery. Ah! that fatal stopping short at Richmond! Never once, since that hour, have I entirely had my own way. No husband, who aspires to rule, should ever confound "almost" with "quite." There may be six Richmonds in the field, but they are still Richmonds. Let him dash through them all, in spite of broken chaise-glasses and pre-meditated fainting-fits. Let him, wise by my disaster, drive on. Let him keep his eye steadily on the finger-post—☞ To Twickenham!

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING TOO LATE.

I AT once warn the sensitive and sceptical reader against the supposition that anything herein contained is intended as an assertion of the advantages of being too late for dinner. No; nature having made the turbot with fins, it is reverentially to be assumed that nature is wise, and that the turbot is better with fins than without them. It is also in accordance with nature that they should be gone if you are behind time. This, as a general principle of punctuality in regard to the grand event of the day, may be admitted; but there are exceptions even to this rule: you may, with great advantage, be too late even for dinner; if a good one, because Messrs. Gout and Indigestion, under the name of a popular professor, have served it; and if a bad one, because—but here a very sufficient reason reveals itself.

Punctuality is a poor, cheap, easy virtue. The man who has no other good quality in life can always have that. It is a key to a moral refuge for the destitute. When we cannot otherwise become exemplary characters, and obtain exaltation in the eyes of the good, we can be punctual. A child, as soon as he knows how to tell the time of day by the house-clock, can be punctual. Anybody can be punctual. It is easy to shape one's course by a rule distinctly laid down, but it requires some sagacity to find out when and how far the rule may be departed from. So with the rule of punctuality. Stupid people may steer by it; but the sensible will know exactly what license to allow themselves with regard to their engagements. In right liberal-mindedness, they read "one for half-past two." "Precisely,"

they understand to mean "presently," in the course of the morning, or any convenient period of time before midnight. They keep their appointments in a gentlemanly spirit, make large allowances for themselves and others, and scorn the despotic principle of exact time by the Horse-Guards. That literal abomination, exact time, was never made for freemen. The slave of the lamp was a child of liberty compared with the slave of the clock. But some people like slavery, and carry little tyrannical and remorseless watches about with them, for the purpose of being reminded of their own humiliating want of independence and self-will; for the purpose of being warned, while doing one thing, that it will soon be necessary to be doing something else; while making desperate love, that they must go; while listening to a strain of Handel's, that it 's eleven o'clock. "To beguile the time," says Lady M., "look like the time." To beguile the time, say we, never know what time it is.

It has been remarked, that the man who keeps others waiting, especially for dinner, is sure to pay a heavy penalty, for the company will not fail to employ every moment of the time in picking his character to pieces. Be it so; the pleasure of despising punctuality more than counterbalances the penalty. Besides, if this consideration is to operate as an inducement to keep military time, does it not argue a rather suspicious dread of the threatened dissection at the hands of scandal! To gallop and risk your neck rather than be forty seconds after the stipulated minute, to work yourself into a fever as a mere matter of politeness, is one thing; but to do this (saying nothing of horses knocked up and a perambulating preparatory seminary knocked down), solely from a fear lest criticism should be busy with your moral character, is surely quite

another thing. For myself, I confess to a very strong suspicion of your particularly punctual man. The bare fact that he is there to his time, exact to a moment, has a twofold signification to his prejudice: implying, first, that his own character will by no means stand the scrutiny to which a want of punctuality would be certain to expose it; and, secondly, that he has an especial relish for the work of scandal to which the first-comers devote themselves, the enjoyment of picking holes in the coats of the late arrivals. What see we on the other hand? The dilatory guest gliding, with measured step, into the apartment one hour and a quarter after time; the man of conscious honour, and indestructible reputation; the martyr of dauntless breast, who knows perfectly well that his character can afford the attack, and whose generous heart prompts him to be particularly late, that he may thus afford his fellow-creatures assembled there before him a long interval of harmless pleasure; the true gentleman, who is quite aware that his coat is unexceptionable, in spite of the holes that have been picked in it by the swarm of moths whom his entrance flutters from their task.

It is unnecessary to descant upon punctuality. The man who exhibits such a quality, deserves to be kept waiting three-quarters of an hour at least in a damp room, without a fire, the one window looking out upon nothing but fog and red tiles; an asthmatic puppy wheezing and yelping from under the door, and somebody practising a lesson on the German flute in the next apartment. Never show him any mercy. He only comes to parade his poor pretensions to a virtue, and to contrast himself and his gold repeater most ostentatiously with all who come in after him.

There is always something either pompous and dictatorial, or necessitous and broken-spirited, in this

literal time-keeping. Who, of two parties to an engagement, is sure to be at the appointed post as the clock strikes? Not the rich man who comes to pay, but the poor man who comes to receive; not the conscious beauty who, long after the hour agreed upon for meeting, wonders what o'clock it can possibly be, but the patient and long-suffering dangler who is dazzled by her charms. *He* may be espied at the trysting-place ten minutes before time, poor devil! All poor devils are obliged to be punctual. They crawl on till they are seventy without the liberty of schoolboys. You see them hurrying and driving to their duty as though the wheels of the whole world would stop if they were a minute behind time. They walk as though they were bent on overtaking the mail, or rather *all* the mails, as they dash through the country in a thousand different directions. What animates those pedestrian prodigies with panting time at their heels? Are they all trudging straightforwards to stop the march of war and preserve the balance of empires, or are they afraid of a fine of fifteenpence for being late? Here's Punch and Judy at the corner of the turning; do they pause even momentarily? do they glance as they go by? no; not even out of the corner of the eye. They encounter a beloved friend fresh from the Indies, and unencountered before for years and years; a dear old boy-friend and school companion. Do they fling themselves into his arms; do they stop and shake his hand off before they pass on? No; there is a glance like dull lightning, a half-articulated "God bless my soul, is that you?" an irresistible snatching away of the five fingers that had been caught and grasped for the sixtieth part of a second; and then, upsetting an apple-stall in less than no time, on they dart, as though they had merely met a wife's relation, or one of the street acquaintances that

are stumbled upon at every corner. The "Horse-Guards" is on the stroke of something; "St. Paul's" only wants two-thirds of a minute to the half-hour! That's their apology. Wait? Wait for one instant? Why, the world would be at an end. "But it's *only* an instant," you cry. They haven't time to set tongue and teeth and lips all in motion, so as to utter a single monosyllable; but you read their response in a passing look of astonishment and pity, which says, "*Only* an instant!"

All who are thus compelled to be punctual, conspire of course to praise the virtue they are obliged to practise. Thus you may hear the whole race of poor devils in every department of business, the slaves of the clock in every condition of life, hypocritically admiring the exact-time system, and throwing the cloak of punctuality over scores of daily transgressions. The old usurer may extort his twelve per cent.; but his victims must say this for him, that if he raised his terms, he kept his word as to time. The seller of damaged goods may get double price for them; but his cheated customers are bound in honour to acknowledge that though he tricks them out of their money, he economises their time to a moment. He drove a hard bargain; he advanced his demand as the necessities of the applicant peeped out; he palmed off his gross of copper-spectacles with exquisite effrontery; he is a pernicious old scoundrel, and would take in his own mother, that's certain; but then this remains to be said of him after all, he may be depended upon to the very moment. He swindles you with both your eyes wide open, granted; but his worst enemies must admit that, he is punctual!

The positive disadvantages of being in time, are abundantly exemplified (if in nothing more) in the pains that people take to be punctual; but to demonstrate

the positive advantages of being "too late," calls for a less discursive mode of arguing a grave question. Take the short history of the late Mr. Slowman Lagfoot. Always behind time, people began to fancy (when, in the prime of life, he had distanced Parr and was treading on the heels of Jenkins), that he would certainly be behind eternity; that he would be too late for the hearse, just as other people may be too late for the omnibus. It was his maxim from the cradle to the coffin, that "it is never too late to be in time;" and never once could he be said to be in time, until he and the Scytheman parted company for ever.

Old Slow (as my grandfather used to call him) was born to good luck, in virtue of being born too late. He was, like Happiness, "a twin," but chanced to come into the world a quarter of an hour after his brother. The brother therefore had the estate; and as Slow was heir to nothing, his uncle left him one twice as large, and with the additional advantage of being unencumbered. Thus the very circumstance that seemed to establish his ill-luck, was the foundation of his good fortune. Had he been born in time, he would have been in the world a little too soon. The same fate followed Master Lagfoot to school. When the boat in which he was to have accompanied some companions on a rowing excursion, was upset, and every little "soul on board" perished; and when paternal, maternal, and fraternal affection combined, was bewailing his untimely loss, and issuing orders for the "drags," regardless of expense; lo! he, the hirer of the boat and the planner of the enterprise, was discovered in the churchyard, a mile off; safe, above-ground, and unsoaked, playing at leapfrog by himself over the least expansive of the tombstones.

When questioned how it happened that he had not

joined the water-party of his own proposing, he replied, —that is, as soon as the stifling caresses of several affectionate inquirers in succession would allow him to take breath:

"Oh, water-party! Ah! Yes! Why, I believe; yes; in fact, if you must know, it so happened, *I was too late!* Yes; and so they went without me!"

He also contrived to be too late for the coach, at that particular commencement of a quarter, when, a return to school being resolved upon, those who went were all sent home, ill, from the overturning of the vehicle, and much worse with the measles, or some other amenity incidental to juvenility, then raging at the school. In long after-years, however, when almost a century old, he managed for once to fall into the fangs of fever, and rolled about as in a fiery furnace in some obscure village, where no medical advice was to be had. Professional aid from London was sent for post haste, night and day were merged in one, the age of steam was anticipated, and the best metropolitan physician arrived in a surprisingly short space of time; but he arrived too late; *too late;* for old Master Lagfoot had meanwhile completely recovered, and lived to boast that he had once more escaped a premature demise on the old principle, operating differently.

Lagfoot was never married, though he once got as far as the church-door. He had a "glorious nibble," but no bite. The lady had consented, the happy day was fixed, the lawyers had written the last word, the dresses had received their final embellishment; nay, the marriage morning dawned, and the bride and her party were within view of the altar; but Lagfoot was not in time. As usual something had occurred to stop him when a check seemed impossible. The party waited and waited; the lady was of an impatient and imperious

temper; and at least half an hour before he reached the portico of the church, her rage had carried her back again in a whirlwind, her wedding-garments were cast off, and she herself was deep in a rumination upon the most efficient mode of re-insnaring a discarded suitor. But Lagfoot never considered himself unlucky in having thus been too late at the most important crisis of his life; for seven years afterwards,—the day before the lady he *might* have married underwent the extreme penalty of the law, for pouring a little molten lead into the ear of her second husband,—it was discovered that she had previously driven a nail, with singular secrecy and effect, into the cranium of her first.

The same advantages resulted from his invariable lateness in all the transactions of life. Lagfoot was to have been on board the Royal George, off Spithead, but the gallant ship went down with its twice four hundred before he had leaped from the land into the boat that was to carry him on board. He had made up his mind to invest an odd ten thousand in the most flagrant of the bubble-schemes of the last century; but when he got into the city he found the office of the company just shutting up, the clerks gone, business over for the day; no, there was nobody, not even a junior or a boy, to effect the investment for the enthusiastic speculator. The next morning, the explosion of the company demonstrated the policy of being too late. If a whole dinner-party happened to be poisoned with stewed mushrooms, Lagfoot had either sent an apology in the morning, or contrived to arrive only in time for the dessert. As with the beginning of a feast so with the end of a fray, he was sure never to arrive until the quarrel was over. A house was broken into and stripped of much valuable property; Lagfoot ought to have been its inhabitant, but he had contrived to postpone his occupancy of it until the next quarter.

Another, which he was just buying, was burnt down uninsured; he had made three appointments to settle the terms of purchase and sign, but, so it chanced on each occasion,—things will happen oddly,—he was too late.

His favourite illustration of the luck of being too late was drawn from the circumstance of the Prussian forces arriving at a protracted period of the contest on the field of Waterloo.

"How lucky that they arrived just in time!" cried somebody.

"What you call in time I call too late," would be Lagfoot's commentary; "too late for the fight is just in time for the victory; too late for risk, is to witness the rout, and to share the renown and the reward. Lucky Prussians! For how many years did millions of very generous-minded English persist in assigning to them the sole glory of deciding the battle!"

Lagfoot, it has been observed, was pretty sure never to arrive at a scene of quarrel until the fray was over; but once in his life, nevertheless, he exposed himself to the unpleasant necessity of fighting a duel. The ground of dispute was every bit as trifling and absurd as grounds of dispute between duellists generally are, nor could he when he awoke at daybreak to attend to his challenger, remember what it really was. Whether, in the endeavour to recollect, he fell asleep again, or whether he missed his way in the morning twilight, I never heard; but it is certain that his second, an inveterate shot, after waiting long, proceeded to the ground without him, expecting, doubtless, to find him there. There, however, was to be found only the impatient and irritated adversary, between whom and the said second a pretty dispute instantly arose, and as the pistols were ready loaded, the ground was measured; when the said second, yes, he who should have been second to the absent

Lagfoot, was shot through the vacuum which he called his brain. Lagfoot would certainly have avenged his friend's fall, by calling out the adversary whom, but for the accidental delay of an hour or so, he had himself encountered; and this time he set about the affair with ominous alacrity; but the result turned out to be the same; he was too late; the gentleman had taken his departure for the continent; people are so very rapid in their movements on these occasions.

His life was exposed to other perils than those of physic, duelling, and drowning; but though the danger was different, the mode of escape never varied. It was in his hot youth that he was persuaded to favour the cause of the Pretender, and pledged himself to join an expedition to the north, for the purpose of effecting a rising. Every man of the little party of adventurers to which he belonged was hanged for treason, and nothing could have saved him from sharing their fate, but the fortunate circumstance of his being too late for the Edinburgh mail on the night appointed for quitting the metropolis in furtherance of the enterprise.

Situated as Lagfoot was, anybody but himself would most assuredly have been consigned to the family vault before his natural time arrived; for it was his fate upon one occasion to be deposited in a handsome coffin, and to lie in state for four-and-twenty hours, as dead to all appearance as a legacy-hunter could wish him. But on the day appointed for the interment the church-gates were closed against the deceased; and the clergyman refused to bury him, as the undertaker was after time. He was therefore taken back again unburied; and that very night a scratching at the inside of the coffin being faintly heard, and then a motion of two or three wine-glasses and a plate of cake placed thereon, being distinctly discerned by the watchers; the lamented gentle-

man was released from the durance and danger to which his excellent imitation of a fit of apoplexy had consigned him. If he had not most luckily been too late to be buried, his death must have been the consequence. A codicil to his last will, bearing date the next day, set forth that a snug annuity was in store for the manager of his funeral whenever that mournful ceremony might again take place, on condition that when the day appointed for the solemn rites arrived, the procession should be so delayed by insurmountable obstacles, as to insure the bringing back of the body, and the postponement of the obsequies for at least four-and-twenty hours.

In short, without planning his procrastinations and arrivals after date, he had the luck of seeing himself continually relieved by them from scrapes, accidents, dilemmas, and annoyances, that must otherwise have befallen him. Before his appointed visit to a friend was permitted to commence (a week after the day fixed), the troublesome troop of children by whom the house was rendered something not unlike a private receptacle for lunatics, were sure to have been sent to school. Late elsewhere, he found himself just in time to discover that Professor Stratum, the great bore, or Mr. Poodle, the great lion, had mercifully departed the day before. Nay, he never joined a stupid evening-party without finding that the worst part of the stupidity had been perpetrated early; that he had arrived too late for the crack musical performance of the night; that little Jemima, the precocious genius of the family, had gone to bed; and that Signor Somethingini, who had so kindly brought his guitar, had as cruelly retired, half an hour previous. Too late (owing to his preference for a pint or so of claret) to accompany a party to the theatre, he was certain, on entering the box at nine, to have the best seat resigned to him, in the humane consideration of his

having missed two out of the five superfluous acts of the dreary play. Continual repetition converts a trifling advantage into a vast blessing; and such was his, in contriving to secure a quiet, comfortable, protracted breakfast by himself, every morning, simply by coming down too late for the family scramble, designated a meal. In these small affairs, as in greater ones, his good fortune furnished him with a perpetual motive for never being in time. He escaped everything, but good luck, by being too late for it.

NOTHING CERTAIN IN LIFE.

"Are you sure of that?"—OTHELLO.

THERE are periods in the age of the world, or in the lives of individuals, when it is absolutely impossible to make sure of anything. Either the present time constitutes one of these epochs, or our own way of life in particular has taken that perplexed and devious turn which forbids reliance upon facts the most obvious, substitutes mystification and doubt for clear conviction, and renders it exceedingly inexpedient to trust implicitly to the evidence of such fallible witnesses as our own eyes or our own ears. As there are seasons when "nothing is stirring but stagnation," so in this, there is nothing quite certain but uncertainty. The only things that we can make sure of are doubts.

Mr. Puff's warning-voice should go forth, not puff-like, but trumpet-toned. His caution is a memorable one, and full of meaning. "Don't be too sure that he *is* a beefeater." It turned out, as the reader will remember, that he was *not*.

"There was a time when all my youthful thought
Was of the Muse, and of the poet's fame."

That was a time of solids, substances, stubborn truths, and approved realities. The later season spent in communion with the hard world, is the season of doubts, visions, perplexities, and shadows. We belong to the nothing-is-but-what-is-not school, as far as present impressions go; of course we are not *sure*.

Nothing appeared more certain, the other day, than that a spade was a spade; nothing is so probable now as that it is something else. It may be a diamond, or a pitchfork. What makes the matter more bewildering is that it *may* be a spade after all; for it does not follow that an object, because it seems one thing, will necessarily be another. There is always the doubt in any case. It is all a puzzle.

When we lately went to the theatre, it was to see a comedy, embracing a numerous set of characters. It turned out to be a farce with only one actor in it. Assured, by the opinions of several profound and impartial critics, that there was no such thing as high tragic genius in dramatic representation existing, and that *Lear* and *Macbeth* had no place upon the stage,—we repaired to another house, and found the loftiest conceptions of the greatest poet embodied with such masterly art, such fineness, originality, and truth, as might satisfy the taste and the desires of the most fastidious age. So improbable is it that you will see what you expect to see.

Our friend Mr. Diddler, a grandson of the great Jeremy, repaid and returned to us, within these ten days, two half-crowns, and an umbrella that he had been prevailed upon to borrow of us one wet night. We shall yet live to see him send back the cloak that we lent him, when it was snowing so heavily last July. Such are the eccentricities of human character. There

is no end to these contradictions, deceptions, and disappointments.

It was not so formerly. We recollect the time when even a writ, served upon a gentleman of this stamp, would not have been returnable. But such is the state of incertitude and want of fixed principle in which we live, that there is no saying what obligation may not meet its return. It is contrary to all established rule, it is being taken by surprise, to have one's very mackintosh, lent perhaps at some inconvenience, returned upon one's hands, as the bootmakers say. To so strange and startling an extremity has this want of confidence in the consistency of our fellow-creatures advanced, that even when an intimate friend borrows our pet volume: the old quarto that can't be bought, or the book whose absence spoils a handsome set; even when he carries off such a treasure as this, we never feel sure *now*; we used, but times are altered so; never feel sure that he will keep it. It is probable, highly probable, that he will bring it back again; scored a good deal, perhaps, down the margin with a hard lead pencil; and with a fairy ring, about the size of the bottom of a tumbler, (the work of spirits), distinctly visible here and there, where the favourite passages occur; but still the volume is returned to us, baffling our speculations touching friendship, confounding our calculations relative to character, and teaching us, with a volume's force, that we should never make too sure of anything; in short, that we can trust nobody.

Turn which way we will, examples of the folly of implicit confidence occur to memory. Were it consistent with delicacy, we could mention the name of a speculator who embarked a considerable capital in a gold-mine affair, and has actually made money. Another adventurous-minded acquaintance of ours married, not

six months ago, a very pretty graceful dancer, a figurante, two seasons old, at the opera; and positively a more nice or prudent wife few married gentlemen's friends could desire to take particular notice of. The manner in which she scolds the maid-servants for being late at church, and for not wearing—habit-shirts, we believe they call them—at all hours, is quite edifying.

Only last night, there was old Tarry-behind (as rare old Bunyan would have called him), the very first to arrive, though he was not expected to join the party until half-past eight; and there was Mr. Punctuality, who loves his neighbour as himself when his neighbour gives a dinner—no, there he was not, for he never arrived at all. More astonishing still, the one guest of all the others who had made a positive promise, who had pledged himself to attend, who was hoped for, and looked for by everybody, who had sent a reiterated assurance of his coming by somebody whom he had met at three in the afternoon: well, he actually came at the hour appointed! How can one make sure after this! How can we witness these things, and still maintain the doctrine of likelihood, preserving our faith in the consistency of human character.

Under these circumstances, who, if lotteries were re-established, could be certain beforehand of drawing a blank! One might even dream of a number, and still it might come up a prize.

We may be allowed to cite another example of unlooked-for results. Certain tender juveniles (their "united ages" hardly exceed twenty-five) whose chance it is to have been brought up among reviewers, editors, and that class of the community, lately started a manuscript journal on their own account, a little weekly gazette of literature and science, all elegantly written (we speak of the penmanship), in double columns, on a

sheet of letter-paper! But so many patrons came about them, so many friends of the family insisted upon subscribing, that to write out weekly all the copies required, was found to be impossible. Proprietors and editors had not an hour left for tops. What is the consequence? The next number is to contain an announcement to the following effect:—"In consequence of the unexpected success which this journal has met with, the proprietors are under the necessity of discontinuing it." To achieve, therefore, is to fail in some cases.

It is impossible in these days to calculate with certainty even upon the wearisome stupidity of a comic pantomime. These things will sometimes turn out to be diverting in spite of their inventors; as instruction is occasionally to be drawn from grave, pompous, moral volumes, the authors of which appear to have taken prodigious pains, and to have exercised considerable ingenuity, in an enlightened endeavour to exclude every chance of edification.

"The thing is as clear as the sun at noonday," is a phrase employed to convey an assurance that the object specified is undeniably apparent. It should more often be used to express the undiscoverableness of the object. Who for weeks past can pretend to have had a glimpse of the sun at noonday! the hour at which he usually attains his highest pitch of obscurity. Yet whatever the chances, nobody can be certain, that even then he will not take it into his eccentric head to shine forth "unawares;" like the lady who, simply for the sake of seeing a tradesman stare, paid him on the spot. There can be no stronger proof of the especial uncertainty which regulates, or rather which does not regulate, the era in which we live, than that no living creature can settle himself in any part of England to pass his

summer-season, without running the chance of two or three, perhaps half-a-dozen, decidedly fine days. It is only a chance, but still there it is. Accidents will happen in the best regulated climates.

There is another comparison sometimes cited in support of the doctrine of certainty, and equally fatal to it. Every reader recollects it, "as sure as eggs is eggs." But "is" they sure? that is the question. When we last stopped to breakfast at the crack inn of a certain market-town in one of the midland counties (we scorn the ill-nature of exact specification), "the eggs was young chickens!" So much for making sure.

Railway travellers have now given up their faith in the regularity of overturns, collisions, and explosions. No longer reposing confidence in the punctuality of a shock, they proceed on their journey with no guarantee that they will arrive at the place of their destination with fewer limbs or a smaller quantity of brain than they possessed at the moment of departure. Notwithstanding the steam-boat collisions during the season, in consequence of the number of careful and experienced men, to whom "no blame" can be attributed, that are employed in that branch of navigation, who can make sure of reaching the bottom of the Thames at any hour of the day, from any one point between Richmond and Gravesend! With such regulations as are now in force, and with such tides of improvement pouring themselves incessantly into one broad and flowing channel, what pedestrian can feel thoroughly secure of being run over by an omnibus, or of being robbed if he gets into it! Would the confident gentleman who calls a cab from the stand—any one; he may take his choice throughout the range of the metropolis—be quite safe in taking a precautionary and prejudging oath that the driver will attempt to cheat him of at least a sixpence! Why,

even the hackney-coachman, who, from the crabbedness of age, or fancied ill-usage caused by cab and omnibus innovation, or perhaps from superior practice and more matured experience in the arts of cheating and abuse, is decidedly the most knavish and insolent of all the vehicular prodigies of the time,—even he will sometimes startle people with a volley of excessive civility, and the demand of his exact fare and not a farthing more. No; perfect reliance is not to be placed in any man. We cannot confidently reckon, whatever the vehicle or the driver, on having our visual organs condemned in even the blandest and most approved style; we cannot assure ourselves that we shall be defrauded even upon the most moderate terms.

There is then no certainty in life. The course of events ever baffles human calculation. Render some profligate a service in sheer unthinking pity, if you will; but do not immediately make up your mind that he will persecute you for similar services twice a week for ten years, and then vilify you without bounds and without compunction for the rest of your life. Make not so sure. Perhaps he will merely persecute you for favours during nine years, and vilify you during the term of *his* natural life only!

Set a thief to catch a thief was a safe maxim once; now the thief who used to be caught so, is apt to be safe instead of the maxim. Can you now ensure a man's life in a duel; guarantee him shot-free? is it quite certain that the pistol of his antagonist will be unloaded, or that his second will get winged instead of himself? Is it an established fact that the aeronaut must inevitably break his neck in the long-run, or that it is physically impossible for an alderman to make any but an apoplectic exit?

There is an old saying, "as regular as death and

quarter-day." Even upon these established certainties, there can now be no reliance. When so many tenants, judging from the all-but universal complaint, labour under that horrible householder's malady, the impossibility of paying up, how can there be said to be any quarter-day for the landlord? and when the landlord, on the other hand, shows the occupiers of his farms and tenements no quarter, it is surely no quarter-day to the tenant.

But death! Ay, "death is certain," as Master Shallow boldly alleges, when he hears that his old acquaintance is dead. But it is Shallow that says it. That should be especially noted. In fact, death is no less an uncertainty; for Shallow's old acquaintance, Double, may perchance be as lively all the time as Prince Hal's "old acquaintance," Falstaff. Lives there a man with soul so dead, as not to feel the presence of Death in the high places of the land? Among the peers of the realm, in the high courts of justice, and even upon the stage where Life in all its forms is delineated! Let those who have mourned for Sir James Scarlett, let all who have bewailed Lord Brougham, let each sorrower over the mortal remains of Mr. Braham (a cloud of witnesses), bear testimony now to the uncertainty of Death. After what has happened, we shall take no ghost's word for a thousand pounds. In these times we shouldn't feel safe in believing a man to be dead, although, as they say in Ireland, he were to tell us so himself.

What is the risk that we incur by our credulity? We burst forth into loud lamentation; we shed more tears than a crocodile, or a widow when unrelieved by solitude from the necessity of aqueous affliction; we quarrel with our best friend for insisting that we shall be comforted, and for hinting that the deceased was,

while yet he lived, a little lower than the angels; we put ourselves to *real* trouble (that's the worst of it) in inventing impossible virtues for the departed; we rack our minds to absolute torture in discovering and devising all the luminous qualities of intellect and genius that it may be possible to endow him with; we order a suit of deep mourning, taking care to have it made of the patent waterproof cloth for the convenience of crying in torrents;—and then, all of a sudden, in steps somebody with his "haven't you heard?" as the prelude to a blunt, laughing, unceremonious, and we will add *unfeeling* declaration, that it 's all a mistake (erratum in our last, for "dead" read "quite the reverse"), and that the illustrious defunct, so far from being food for worms, is just then hospitably entertaining a particularly hilarious party at dinner. Rather than run the risk of having the most sacred feelings of our nature trifled with at this rate, we would live on for ever in disbelief of death; repudiating the theory of mortality; in doubt, perpetual and anxious, as to the final departure of Queen Anne.

Or suppose the erroneous register of a name in the obituary produces, as will happen in some cases, feelings of an opposite nature! Suppose the seal of death unseals living lips; that the speechlessness of one brings the signal for speaking to many; that we reverse the popular maxim, and adopt the *nil nisi malum* principle, resolving at last to say openly all we think of the deceased. Do we incur less risk of eventful discomfiture, however pleasant the sport may be while it lasts? Grant that we give free loose to our love of truth directly the breath is presumed to be out of the body, and immediately set about proving the dead lion to have been an ass while alive; that we hear the sad news with a shrug, and confess that everything is

ordered for the best, adding that if the calamity had happened long before, it might have been better still for all parties; that the present is not an occasion when the most sensitive of human plants can be expected to be much moved, and that no created thing will be broken-hearted about the business; that for our own parts we have not the smallest wish to seize, at such a moment, an opportunity of being ill-natured, but at the same time everybody must admit that he was a horrid brute; that we have been acquainted with him from childhood, continuing in close intimacy to the day of his death, but that if we were called upon to say what we think of him (as we are not), truth and candour would require us to own that a thicker head, or a hollower heart, we never had the misfortune to be bored with or to be injured by; that there may be persons who thought him amiable, but we will venture to say they are all in Bedlam; that some people very possibly thought him not such a fool as he looked, but that it would have served such boobies right if they had been condemned to pass an evening in his company, that's all. Grant that we have said all this and much more, substituting for a tearful elegy a stinging epigram, of which we have just been prevailed upon to give *one* copy to an especial friend of the deceased; when lo! the door is flung open, his name is pronounced, the deceased himself stalks in, in his habit as he lived, the late Mr. Cumagain alive and merry; cognisant, too manifestly cognisant, of all that has been said, and too full of malicious satisfaction himself to render practicable on our part even the decent assumption of joy. It is quite in vain, in all such cases, to attempt to turn the tables by protesting that we knew him to be in the flesh all along, had enjoyed the joke amazingly, all the more for having had the best of it; had vilified him

with the sincerest friendship, and scouted him with the profoundest admiration. It won't do; he knows us; and nothing is left but to fall back upon a conviction of the wisdom of disputing every man's death until he has been buried, and of inwardly questioning it even then. The only possible consolation that the case admits of is, that you *have* had the brief but intense enjoyment of abusing him without reserve—

"Come what may, you have been blest."

And here we should break off; for we have inadvertently refuted our own doctrine; we have stumbled on a certainty.

But since, as we have all witnessed very recently, dead men live to tell tales, returning to life after having been put to death upon unexceptionable authority, it behoves all men to settle the principle upon which the characters of gentlemen who have undergone their first death are to be discussed. The *nil nisi bonum* principle is palpably a failure; it can only act as a provocative of the evil. A maiden dissolution will be cheerfully encountered by numbers, if they can be quite sure of a dazzling epitaph, all notes of admiration. We shall find people addicted to dying annually, and the custom of celebrating the anniversary of our own death will be as common as that of signalising the day of our birth. This would become intolerable. It is hard enough to be obliged to find virtues for a friend once; to discover by the time his tombstone is ready for chiselling, that he was loving to his wife, affectionate to his children, and faithful to all the world; but to lead a life of lying, in this way, would be impossible. A flood of tears, again, is a heavy tax upon some constitutions, and sufficiently trying to all; but who on earth could be supposed capable of continually secreting onions in

white cambric, or of breaking his heart at a minute's notice once a twelvemonth. Frequent demises, therefore, are seriously to be deprecated; even a bare plurality of deaths must, in many cases, be inconvenient to survivors But the plurality being, as it seems, inevitable in these days, does it not, as we have intimated, become necessary to determine upon the principle which is to regulate the tone and matter of every man's epitaph, elegy, funeral oration, or biographical sketch, the first time he dies. For ourselves, we have a strong bias towards the silent system; we were always conscious of a secret veneration for those Spartan ladies,

> "Who saw their husbands die and nobly chose
> Never to say a word about them more."

Nothing, we apprehend, would be more likely to cure men of sham-suicide, or their friends of mock-assassinations, than a rule religiously laid down, that the deceased was never to be mentioned so long as he happened to be dead! "Of the dead nothing, whether good or bad." That would be a safe translation of the old maxim into modern English. To die is to sleep; let us say nothing of the dead, then, lest we wake them prematurely. As we now act upon the extreme principle of depreciating the merits of the living, and exaggerating the good qualities of the departed, suppose we were to try the opposite extreme—the principle of saying nothing of the dead, who are presumed to be deaf, and of talking more about the virtues of the living, who would be apt to speak better of their neighbours if they could hear more agreeable accounts of themselves.

In fact, if we cannot be positive even upon the simple point, whether a deceased gentleman be dead or not, how should we able to tell upon a sudden precisely what to think of his character. His family, friends

and servants, also the directors of hospitals, and other benevolent institutions, may easily form their opinions the instant his will has been read; but the public have no such aids, and when we don't know what to think, depend upon it, it's best not to think at all. It is impossible to ascertain whether any man is worth remembering until it is high time he was forgotten, for the benefit of aspiring genius, and a surviving generation. Some desperate remedy for the evil of double-deaths, must at all events be devised; or the newspapers will be under the necessity of making their "Fashionable Arrivals" a kind of repetition of the "Obituary."

"From the New Cemetery, Harrow-road, the late Mr. Etcetera, &c. &c. The distinguished deceased, on alighting from his hearse, was received by his afflicted family with every token of joy and congratulation. The members of numerous families of rank left their cards the next day, anxious to testify, by welcoming his return, their extreme repugnance to the principle of the legacy-duty, which most of them would have had to pay to a very serious amount had his lamented decease been prolonged. As the feelings of the revived gentleman, on the occasion of his restoration, may be more easily described than conceived, we should certainly enter into a particular account of them, if the details of his funeral did not already occupy so large a portion of our space. It is gratifying to learn that his domestic habits, on his return from the Cemetery, have undergone not the slightest change; his usual conduct as a husband, father, and friend, being totally uninfluenced by those virtues of tenderness, affection, and fidelity which, of course, were ascribed to him, but which are naturally understood to be of a posthumous character."

To what endless anomalies and inconveniences may not the practice of double-deaths lead. If it be not

stopped, we may expect to find artists who had undoubtedly died months before, making caricature sketches of their own chief mourners; and late lamented authors lampooning or challenging their biographers, in revenge for some opinions in the "Memoirs," or some omission in the "Literary Remains." By the way, married speculators on the chances of the obituary, should be cautious in determining, during their last moments, the length of time they intend to remain dead; for widows have a knack of going off rather rapidly, and the possibility of a return might by no means have the effect of rendering them slower in their new matrimonial movements.

As nothing, however, is quite certain, there is of course no saying positively that things will ever come to such a pass as this.

SUITING THE ACTION TO THE WORD.

"But oh! what rapture do we find,
When *demonstration* leads the mind," &c.—DILWORTH.

Of all conceivable classes of practical people, there is one certain set whose system deserves to be held in especial abhorrence.

The principle of suiting the action to the word, may be perfectly sound in some cases; but the exceptions are too numerous to justify a general adoption of the rule. In the case of a promise to pay, the suit-the-action-to-the-word system is eminently desirable; but nobody above the level of a pettifogger, sniffing damages, would desire it to apply in a case of threatening to kick. It is excellent, no doubt, in the instance of a charity-

sermon; but highly disagreeable in association with a sentence to be hanged.

The practical people, to whom a strongly disrespectful allusion has just been made, constitute that class of expositors, who, let them be upon what subject, or in what society they may, are never satisfied without an ocular demonstration of any fact they may happen to report.

They are to be met with in every street, in every drawing-room, at the club and at the theatre. Go not very near them, if you can possibly help it. Even at church it may be prudent to shift your seat into the next pew; you are never safe but when you are out of reach.

These demonstrators are dangerous then? What is it they *do?* He who is simple enough to ask the question has never, it is clear, received a friendly poke in the ribs, in exposition of some circumstance or event obligingly related to him by one of these practical people.

An individual of this species is matter-of-fact to the very tips of his eyelashes. If he were to dream, it would be upon the principle of a clock, or a spinning-jenny, or a steam-engine. His visions would be accurately measured off into yards and furlongs, their rainbow-hues would be arranged in exact order and to a set pattern, and he would tell you in the morning, to an ounce, the precise weight of a nightmare.

If such be the principle that must regulate his dreams, it is easy to guess how he would describe occurrences that happen when he is awake. He cannot be content to talk, he must *act*. He has always a misgiving about mere words, and resorts to his arms or legs, or to his umbrella, or an article of furniture, to eke out the

meaning, and give force to his description. Thus, if his talk be of dancing, he cuts an illustrative caper; or should he attempt to describe Catalani's singing, he will squeeze out an asthmatic note of explanation, a thick guttural sound, to make the account clear, and assist your comprehension. "Ah! if you had heard her when her voice went up *so*," is a favourite expression of his, a screech following, of course. The expositor never thinks he has done anything, until he has tried to show you practically *what* was done. He is the man who, with his remorseless walking-stick, crops your tulips to exemplify the system of decapitation in the East; and he would joyfully set your chimney on fire, if he could convey to your mind an idea of the eruption he witnessed when he was last at Naples. He esteems his description nothing, if not illustrated; he is an illustrator, or he is nobody.

There are people, we all meet them daily, who seem to think that their bare words are not to be taken. They have always a superabundance of emphasis, and when relating the most trivial and probable circumstances, they support the credible narrative with solemn asseverations of its truth, as though any one could doubt it. You may catch them swearing to such a fact as this: "I was going up Waterloo-place this morning, when what should I see tearing down from Regent-street, but an omnibus,—*upon my life it's true.*" They are only to be matched by those practical persons of whom we are speaking, who assume that what they *say* goes for nothing, and that nobody can understand them, unless they demonstrate and attitudinise as they proceed. They reverse the position, which the moral poet shows to be the false one,—

> "*Their* pride in acting, *not* in reasoning lies;"

but they are, nevertheless, not a whit nearer to its

opposite. Nay, the harder they toil, the farther they often are from the point they propose to attain; inasmuch as their simple, unillustrated statement may conjure up an image in the mind of the listener, which the spectator's eye is slow to recognise in the acted representation of it. They weaken their oral account of the most ordinary miracle by endeavouring to realise it visibly, "injuring their credit by offering too much security." The picture that lives bloomingly in description, is as dead as Queen Anne when deemed susceptible of bodily delineation. We can allow the old soldier to gabble on, while we imagine more wonders than his weak words hint at; but when he

"Shoulders his crutch, and shows how fields were won,"

the sublime hobbles out, and burlesque rushes in in triumph.

Take a literal example suggested by the word acting. An illustrious old stager was on one occasion eloquent, to a degree that made the jaded hour of four in the morning look fresh as half-past eleven at night, while descanting on the wonderful qualities of a tragedian of the past age, George Frederic Cooke. In the general picture drawn, in the masterly analysis of power, the imagination saw a prodigy, and Cooke grew into a wonder before eyes that had never beheld him; but when the glowing eulogy terminated in an accurate and vivid imitation of the voice and manner of the actor, the spell was broken, and the audience broke up too, thoroughly convinced that the magnificent tragedian was a monstrous savage.

But the practical man pluming himself upon suiting the action to the word, does not always miss the great point he aims at, which is conviction. He seeks to convince you at all hazards; and thanks to his physical

energy, exemplified in the poke in the ribs feelingly alluded to above, he sometimes succeeds. We do not here advert to the poke so frequent as to be quite familiar, wherewith a smart jest, a delicate and fragile pun, is, some minutes after its birth, in certain companies rewarded, attended often by the approving exclamation, "Sly dog," or "Devilish clever!"

No; this sort of hit has its defence; it serves to symbolise the rubs and knocks, accompanied with praise, which genius is sure, at some period of its career, to encounter from its fickle and hard-fisted admirers; and happy is that gifted benefactor of his kind, who, having convulsed the world with fattening laughter, or sprinkled it with purifying tears, sustains no heavier ill at his hands than a half-spiteful, half-affectionate dig, administered once in a way just a little below the heart. But the physical energy indicated above, plants hits less defensible. Its pokes and digs admit of no excuse, because they are wholly superfluous. As the "hardy tar" said, after taking his three dozen at the gangway, "I should ha' been just as well without 'em."

Let us explain. How often in the week do we encounter a practical man who deems it expedient, the better to illustrate his meaning or enforce the moral of his tale, to give one a precious rap or an explanatory punch somewhere.

"See," he says illustrating his position, "see; in this way; stand so; I won't hurt you."

You feel the force of his argument for the rest of the day. He has laid down certain rules of logic, and you are to be laid down with them. To make an impression upon you, is to accomplish his point; and he takes the shortest cut.

Another comes up all rage and desperation, but the feeling is genteelly smothered; you see the smoke, and

innocently ask the cause of the fire. He has been assaulted by a ruffian; he was walking quietly along, through a retired part of Westminster, thinking of nothing but the philanthropist Howard and Father Mathew, when a drunken savage ran wilfully against him, and striking him violently upon the shoulder, almost dislocated it.

"Look here," he continues, "in *this* manner!" at the same instant making a sudden and unexpected movement with his uninjured arm, and bringing his whole weight to bear upon you with a shock that calls to mind a charge of cavalry; all in admirable illustration of the injury sustained by the gentle demonstrator.

No *words* of his would, in his judgment, convey an idea of the outrage he had suffered; nothing short of a practical demonstration will satisfy his mind that you comprehend the nature of his wrong. Ten chances to one that he is not satisfied even then; he sees you wince under the assault; he hears your indignant protest against this personal exemplification of a grievance; and his apologetic reply is, "Ah, *that's* nothing; you've no idea of it yet; now just let me show you." Hereupon he draws himself up for a second and more effective illustration; preparing himself for a rush upon your already partially-shattered frame, that would have well-nigh broken the stubborn square at Waterloo.

"I hate that Ironsides," said Tom Flint, the other day. (It was Tom's visit that suggested the idea of this article, illustrating the illustrative tendencies of practical people).

"What has he been doing now, Tom?"

"Oh! he's so ferocious in his friendships," rejoins Flint, sulkily. "He's always so deucedly glad to see you, and so infernally sorry when you are going away, that he grasps your hand, and holds it in a vice for a

couple of minutes, till the water runs out of your eyes. Why can't people be friendly without doing one an injury?"

"Perhaps you admire that system of shaking hands, which consists in just touching your palm with one or two lax lifeless fingers, and withdrawing them again without so much as an apology for a squeeze?"

"No, no, I don't," returned Flint; "but there's a difference between a hand of warm wax, like one of Madame Tussaud's, and an iron fist that crushes every bone in your fingers instead of shaking them. That fellow now, under pretence of an affectionate regard for me, has given me such a grip, that the edge of my mourning-ring has cut the next finger to the bone. See here," proceeded Tom, seizing my hand, "he takes your fingers *so;* you'd think they were in a vice, wouldn't you?"

And here the tender, weak-nerved, and protesting Flint, all gentleness himself, compressed my digits till, as in his own case, the water poured from my eyes, and testified to the force and fidelity of his illustration.

You can never check these inveterate practitioners by crying out "Tell me, don't show me." It is in vain to assure them that you can clearly comprehend the inconvenience of a crushed bone without experiencing it. They will not give you credit for a capacity to conceive their feelings until, by an experiment upon your frame, they have produced a corresponding set of sensations. They will not allow you to take anything for granted; they afford no scope for the fancy. So utterly matter-of-fact are they in all their notions, that they cannot imagine even the existence of imagination in another.

As this habit of demonstrating grows up in total disregard of a friend's bodily comfort, so in its exercise it is not very scrupulous about a friend's personal property.

One of the demonstrators dined with us upon a certain occasion, when a glass was observed to be slightly chipped at the rim, and a remark was made on the delicacy of the blow that had fractured so nicely without destroying the glass.

"Oh," said my friend, eager for an exposition, "it is very easily done; observe!"

And with the intention of chipping a glass he gave one a smart rap with the back of a knife, and broke it.

"Rather too full a hit," he observed, "I should have struck a little more obliquely. See here, now!"

And another glass was demolished.

"Ah, that goes for nothing," proceeded my experimentalist; "I know it *is* to be done."

And after shivering three glasses to atoms and cracking a fourth, he proved that he was right, by triumphantly chipping the edge of a fifth.

These enthusiasts in the cause of practical knowledge can scarcely relate a new anecdote, how the Great Captain, once upon a time, called out, "Up, guards, and at 'em!" without overturning the table.

The passion for exemplifying pursues them everywhere. Hand them some prints with the gentlest possible suggestion to be cautious, and they will expatiate handsomely upon the barbarous way in which some persons turn over the contents of a portfolio.

"You will see a rough-handed blockhead," say they, "knock about beautiful prints, here now, *in this way*," tossing them about, at the same time, like a pack of cards, to show you ocularly, how very shamefully you are liable to be treated.

"Haven't you seen people," they proceed, "take hold of a valuable engraving with their unwashed finger-and-thumb, and crush the corner of it, *thus!*" Suiting, as usual, the action to the word!

For the sake of showing you *how* some shabby book was injured, they would disfigure the finest.

"Never lend your books," said a demonstrator, warningly, one day, "to that Hipsonberry; at every place where he leaves off he turns down the page, in *this* fashion!"

And here, of course, a volume was snatched up for illustration, to show practically *how* a leaf is turned down by an unconscionable reader.

These suit-the-action-to-the-word people have another favourite trick. They denounce some esculent as not simply disagreeable to the palate, but so surpassingly nauseous as to be sickening; this duly expatiated on, they wind up with, "Only taste it!" They discover some other substance, obnoxious in as curious a degree to the olfactory nerves, and they are sure to crown their peroration upon its offensiveness, with "Just smell it now!"

They are the only eccentrics upon earth who are desperately offended when you are willing to take their words for a fact. Their simple affirmation in either of these cases is all-sufficient; but they as good as tell you that there is no trust to be put in them, and that their opinions are worth nothing. These practical, proof-loving men are truly modest creatures.

Some of them, rather than allow a mere description to take the place of a demonstration, will go so far as to practise upon themselves, to their own detriment, when the more convenient machinery of a bystander is not to be had. If they state some fact from which they are suffering, they give you an example of the fact and of the suffering too. They act a painful scene all over again, just as Launce does by the aid of his dog and his shoe.

When a fly has found its way into their eyelid, and

they tell you how acute the agony is upon opening the eye, they *open the eye* immediately to convince you of their accuracy.

We can all recollect what Abernethy is reported to have said to the simple lady, who consulted him about her inward bruise, and explained that when she raised her left arm ("suiting the action to the word") it put her to extreme torture.

"Then what a confounded fool you must be to do it," was the muttered reflection of the sensible man.

Shakspeare, who missed nothing, must have seen some of these practical people, and has turned his observation to the usual excellent account. Othello, instructing his hearers as to what they are bound to report of him in Venice, proceeds,

> "Say, too, that in Aleppo once,
> When a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian, and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him—*thus!*"

The stage direction adds; "*Othello stabs himself.*" This is undoubtedly carrying the principle of practical exposition to its farthest possible limit.

When Shakspeare does a thing he does it thoroughly; and we have almost wished, when obligingly invited to swallow something nauseous by way of testing its disagreeableness, that the matter as well as the manner of the Moor were adopted by the demonstrators. When they relate a story of shooting or poisoning, they should illustrate with pistol or prussic acid, and die dramatically, martyrs to the truth of illustrated narrative.

Short of that extent, which may be thought to go a little too far, there is, it must be confessed, high authority for the practice without resorting to fable.

When the illustrious Burke declared in the House of

Commons, that rather than witness the direful calamity (in deprecation of which he had delivered an impassioned and masterly address), he would plunge a dagger in his heart; at the same time drawing one from under his waistcoat, and exhibiting it to the fear-surprised eyes of honourable gentlemen; he hit upon a magnificent specimen of the practical and the demonstrative.

His friend, the all-admired Fox, figures more pleasantly and wittily in an equally well-known story, the tendency of which is similar. When interrupted, in an allusion to a gentleman whose name will immediately transpire, by loud cries of "Name, name!"

"No," he said, "I must decline mentioning him, though to do it is as easy as to say Jack Robinson."

But both these examples we must consider to be eclipsed by the admirable faculty for practical illustration once strikingly displayed, very strikingly as will be seen, by an eminent pamphleteer now dead, who in his younger days was usher in an humble school. Expounding to a publisher (who had called during school-hours to settle terms for a new treatise on finance) the merits of a grand plan for paying off the national debt without sponge or money: "Sir," said he, "I here prove by simple arithmetic, that there is no more difficulty in paying it off at once, than there is in *caning this boy!*" at the same instant, dragging one from the nearest form and caning him vigorously; but observe, without the least difficulty.

The illustration was triumphant. The mode of argument was more than forcible, it was convincing. By merely comparing the two tasks of liquidating the debt and flagellating the boy, he just raised an idea of their identity in point of ease; the consequence was, that he seemed to establish the practicability of the one by immediately performing the other. When the

admiring publisher saw the boy flogged, he fancied the debt was paid. It was the cane that did it all; the comparison would have been nothing without the successful practical experiment.

Desirous of dealing fairly by the demonstrators, as by us they have not done, this anecdote is cited because it seems to supply some vindication of their practice. We are not, and possibly nobody is in these times, so absurd as to object to the flogging of a boy merely because he is not our own, and has committed no offence. The question is, not whether the little ceremony with the cane is just, but whether it is expedient; whether the injury done to the weaker party is a convenience to the stronger. In the case referred to, it was; and the demonstrative principle succeeded. We complain of it only where it fails; where an unwarrantable attack is made without beneficial results; where the outrage is wholly superfluous. It is thrown away, when an acquaintance jams one's hat down over one's eyes, for the mere sake of showing how his own had just before been served in the mob; but it would be by no means thrown away, perhaps, if, while seated beside an author seeing his new play, you were to hiss loudly, with the view of exemplifying to the dramatist the energy with which some brute in the pit had been hissing in his absence.

Nay, you may even go all lengths with the demonstrators, provided you keep a desired object distinctly in view; you may not only injure another, but yourself also, when a great moral end is to be answered.

A story occurs, as a case in point, of a needy gambler, who wished to palm himself off as a pigeon upon a famous rook whom he had never before met, or at least to beget a conviction that he could pay what he lost; which otherwise might seem doubtful.

"Why, sir," said he, "I value it (whatever they were

conversing about) I value it no more than I do this bank-note;" taking out one of the last two tens he had left in the world, and quietly lighting his cigar with it.

How empty would have been this vaunt without the flame! The sacrifice was essential to success. Success! by which, in every age and in every class of life, so much that is doubtful in policy and worse than doubtful in morals, is triumphantly vindicated.

The chapter of complaints directed against those who *do* suit the action to the word is after all a short one; but what a volume would it have been, had it included commentaries upon those who do *not* suit the action to the word.

Hazlitt wrote a brilliant essay some years ago, upon "Persons one would wish to have seen."

"Very well," said Charles Lamb, upon reading it, "then I 'll write a paper twice as long, on 'Persons one would wish *not* to have seen'."

FEMALE ARITHMETICIANS.

FIGURES on China jars and ivory fans, figures in intricate quadrilles, and figures of polite rhetoric, are among the things which education and custom have rendered perfectly comprehensible to every woman of taste; but figures of arithmetic are unquestionably matters on which even the most enlightened and accomplished of the sex are apt to entertain rather confused ideas.

We intend not hereby the remotest of remote allusions to the subject of *age*. On that point, it is well known their notions are for the most part perfectly clear—per-

fectly clear; as they always are with regard to the particular hour of the night at which "truant husband" returned home from the club or the play. They never confound the sober hour of eleven with dissipated half-past one, when discussing the question over the breakfast-table next morning. Never.

You never hear them upon such occasions cry—

"My dear, it's of no use talking; I'm sure it was half-past one before you came to bed, and I believe it was *two*, comparatively speaking."

(This phrase, by the way, this "comparatively speaking," is invaluable as a qualifier of exaggeration, while it justifies and makes clear the most preposterous comparisons. The scold informs her wedded victim that he is enough to provoke a saint, "comparatively speaking;" and the traveller fresh from New York declares that he had seen cheeses there in which the mites were as large as muffins, "comparatively speaking.")

But with reference to those figures which are sometimes essential in the calculations of "domestic economy," with reference to the phraseology current in what is called the monetary world, most women are, for half their lives at least, in a delicious mystification, an exquisite obliviousness. "Five per cent.," constitutes a case of perplexity, and "per ann.," converts it into an enigma not to be solved.

We never quote without book; here is an argument drawn from real life, that is exactly in point.

"Make haste, Edward, make haste down, you'll be too late," cried the anxious mistress of a pretty lodge at Kensington, to its hurried, flurried, worried master, as the omnibus that took him to town drove up to his gate the other morning.

"How I do hate this omnibus life!" she continued,

as after two or three "Now, sirs," from the road, he darted past her, just in time.

"Only to think of my being obliged to see that dear fellow rush out of doors every morning, as if the house were on fire! That horrid omnibus! It doesn't care how husband and wife part!"

And the affectionate creature, left to herself, sat down to meditate on grave matters. Various abstruse and difficult calculations kept her brain in full employment until his return, when the result began to unfold itself in this interesting observation:

"In my opinion, Edward, we could very well afford a carriage!"

A slight shrug, a movement of the eyebrows, a rather melancholy smile, and a decided shake of the head, conveyed the discouraging answer.

"Well, but think now," pursued the lady, "just estimate the expenses. What would a carriage and horses, once purchased, cost in the year?"

"Pair of horses? Oh, why, a hundred a year; set it down at a hundred, certain," was the reply.

"And what, now, does the omnibus cost you, may I ask?"

"Omnibus? Oh, why, eight pounds, about eight."

"But this you would *save*," argued the lady; "for if we had the carriage, you would not want the omnibus, you know."

"That's true; yes, of course, I should save the eight pounds."

"Well, well!" cried the lady, with a look of exquisite simplicity, yet in a tone that implied something of exultation as a discoverer.

"Well! and wouldn't that be getting *eight per cent.*?"

Wise and excellent is the law that gives, in due succession, the sway of this empire to the hand of a woman.

Ever may we have reason to rejoice while a lady sits on the throne; but, perhaps, it is quite as well that women should still be, as heretofore, excluded from the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Kind, pretty, perplexing Mrs. Dipple, was the exact representative of that class of feminine economists to which we are referring. She knew when she wanted fifty pounds without looking into her account-book; but as for showing, when it was all gone, how it had been expended in the "house affairs," you might as well expect Master Bidder to furnish an account of all the items, because he was such an excellent reckoner. Yet account for the sum she would, in her way, she was such a severe economist. She was the most accurate of all lady-arithmeticians that the world has yet looked upon, the most expert at rendering a family Dr. and Cr. account. Still she never got beyond this point.

Having put down the 50*l.* received, she set against it, in the opposite column, the sums she could most readily recollect paying; and when she could remember no more, she added them up, amounting to 17*l.* 5*s.* The difference she discovered, by the rule of subtraction, to be exactly 32*l.* 15*s.*, which sum she immediately charged as "sundries," added it to the other sum expended, drew a triumphant line, and thus balanced the account. She was such an economist, that she even economised her very figures.

This done, off she went to the admiring Mr. Dipple.

"There, my dear, it 's fit that somebody should keep an account of the money that flies so fast, though *you* have no taste or talent that way. I know you don't wish me to do it, but I always shall insist upon keeping a petty cash-book. For my part, I like to know how the money's spent. There 's an exact account of the fifty pounds I had of you the other day; you can see

how it 's all gone, for gone it is;—oh! and by the way, since we 're on the subject, I want another fifty."

It must be observed, that however Mrs. Dipple's discourse upon domestic economy might begin, it was sure to end, invariably, with this identical intimation.

We always admired that Romish priest of Fielding's, who descanted for an hour in contempt of riches, and ended with begging the loan of eighteenpence to pay his reckoning. Nor should we less admire the thriftiness of Mrs. Dipple, because it ended with a motion for a fresh supply; or depreciate the arithmetic which, in showing her by a sum total the amount she had expended, suggested to her the exact amount she then wanted.

The profound writer whom we have just quoted has a remark, which some will hold to be less worthy of his almost unerring sagacity in the detection of human weaknesses and vices.

"Many a woman," he says, "who shrinks at a mouse or a rat, may be capable of poisoning a husband, or, what is worse, of driving him to poison himself."

We by no means incline to subscribe (publicly) to this detestable doctrine; but we may perhaps just venture, doubtfully, so far as to request to be permitted to observe, in place thereof, that many a woman who shrieks about a shilling or a sixpence, is capable of throwing away a hundred pounds in cash, or, what is worse, of needlessly running up a bill to that amount.

Dear Mrs. Dipple—for her very failings endeared her to us all, they so became her somehow, like the new fashion in a sleeve or a head-dress, that turned other people into frights, but always suited her exactly—dear Mrs. Dipple, it must be confessed, had a slight touch of this diverting quality.

It was amusing, and it was instructive too, to see

how eager and earnest she would be in her personal inspection of the change out of a fourpenny-piece at the turnpike, and how gracefully indifferent she became, a quarter of an hour after, about a few pounds more or less in the price of the shawl or the tea-service.

Thus she would carefully note down the cost of the concert-ticket, but not a word about the new dress that she had to go in. If she went upon an excursion to some small Strawberry-hill in those days, some mere pottle of a place, you would see, in her next weekly account of expenditure, the charge for a hired carriage, with every minute particular of the extortion accurately set forth; but not a figure would be introduced indicative of the sum at which some astonishing bargain of a curiosity had been knocked down to her. In short, in her account, a little halfcrown box bought to keep some odd trinket in, would be duly charged at two-and-sixpence; but the cost of the trinket itself would be merged in the sum-total put down for "sundries."

Her arithmetical scheme might have been originally derived from the astronomical system of the ingenious lecturer, who informed his hearers that the great component parts of creation consisted of the sun, moon, earth, Halley's comet, and sundries. Only club the stars together under the name of sundries, and a world of difficult explanation is spared.

One principle which good Mrs. Dipple invariably adopted in keeping this account which she *would* keep, was to specify a certain number of trifles in general, and then those few trifles in particular wherein Mr. Dipple himself was personally concerned. The first carried with them an air of comprehensive research into all the minutiæ of housekeeping, while the second took the semblance of veritable proofs of accuracy.

Thus, though certain weightier items were pruden-

tially merged in the convenient class of "sundries," Mr. D. was pretty certain to find the eighteenpence which had been paid for his cab-hire, or the half-sovereign that he had caught up when going out in a hurry, or the few shillings disbursed for his gloves, put down with scrupulous and undeviating exactness in the admirable family account. It was only to cite these small sums of which he knew, to show him clearly how the fifty pounds had been spent.

"True," he used to observe, "I did snatch up a half-sovereign from the table one morning; I recollect it; it was on Tuesday week. What a thoughtful little soul it is! Bless her, how carefully she does keep her accounts!"

Mrs. Dipple always took excellent care of the pence, and Mr. Dipple was always perfectly satisfied that the pounds took excellent care of themselves.

Mrs. Dipple managed all her household matters not merely without stinginess, but with liberality; yet when that rage, which no great while ago ran from one end of middle life to the other,—that feeling which may be supposed to have possessed the bosoms of all Aladdin's neighbours, at the cry of "Who will change their old lamps for new ones?"—that running after new lights that led the great bulk of the lamp-burning community into the seventh heaven of economy, in the use of "common oil,"—when that consuming rage first seized upon families, rousing them to repurchases, to exchanges, or to alterations of their old lamps, Mrs. Dipple could not be insensible to the obligation of proving herself at least as disinclined to extravagant expenditure as the chariest of her acquaintances.

This was not enough; she must outstrip them all. *They* had their lamps altered instanter, at the cost of a guinea. Mrs. Dipple resolved to *wait;* the new in-

vention would infallibly cheapen itself. It did, and at the expiration of a year and a half, she succeeded in having the necessary improvements effectually rendered for eleven shillings per lamp! The figure looked remarkably low, considering the saving, when introduced into the domestic account; though to be sure a loss of several pounds had been incurred, by burning the more expensive oil for a year and a half after their neighbours had dispensed with it.

Among the human eccentrics that compose the common stock of our acquaintances in this droll place, the world, is one who, when a heavy shower came on, went into a shop and asked permission to leave a large cotton umbrella there for a few hours. He didn't like to put it up, because it was quite a new one, and had never been used; so he walked home through the rain. We half suspect that Mrs. Dipple was a distant relative of his.

What we are far more sure of is, her descent from a famous economist, whose name we shall not mention. When his magnificent mansion was found to be on fire, and all eyes and hands were turned, naturally enough, to the pleasing range of fire-buckets that ornamented the outer court, this prince of economists positively interdicted the use of them; peremptorily prohibited everybody from even so much as touching them; the buckets had been newly painted, and the crest and initials were in gold.

Whether, by any peculiar kind of calculating machine to be hereafter born of Babbage's, domestic economy may become simplified; whether by a new system of summing up or of subtracting, the annual expenditure of a hundred pounds, and the annual saving of eight, may be shown to be identical with a gain of eight per cent. per annum; whether the assemblage of all the

important items of an account under the head of sundries, may be found to be the most lucid and explanatory method of book-keeping, we cannot yet say; but we hear that when the Rev. Barnabas Shaw, missionary to southern Africa, first commenced ploughing, in the presence of a number of chiefs, one of them pithily remarked that "*one plough was equal to seven wives!*"

Now only think of one silent, senseless, figure-manufacturing, unintellectual, unhandsome calculating machine, merely because it might be exact in its accounts, being for a single instant considered equal to seven charming, delightful, inexact, half-reckoning, arithmetical non-economists, like Mrs. Dipple!

WANTED A NEIGHBOUR.

I NEVER catch a glimpse of the Monument from that distant part of the metropolis where I reside, without sympathising most deeply with the man who, from early dawn to set of sun, is stationed at the top to prevent people of a lively turn of mind from jumping off. He must be so sadly in want of neighbours.

There are glorious views among the Alps, and magnificent sites for villas on the Himalayan Mountains; but I should not like to take a house there for any lengthened term of years; the neighbourhood, or rather the want of a neighbourhood, would be highly objectionable. There may be snug living enough upon Salisbury Plain; but I always prefer having somebody residing within gun-shot. And there is very snug living no doubt (if without presumption the allusion may be hazarded) in Buckingham Palace; yet is there in the position of its Illustrious Inhabitant, one pecu-

liarity from which most of her subjects are happiest when they are exempt. It may be thus described: Thousands of people live around and about the Palace, but the Queen has no neighbours.

Man's duty towards his neighbour has many branches, but mine has one branch extra. In fact, the leading point of my duty towards my neighbour, is to find him. When a boy, the adventures of Robinson Crusoe exercised over my mind an irresistible fascination; and for three years I dreamed of nothing, day or night, but the charms of shipwreck and the seductiveness of a desert island; but I could not help thinking that a pleasant neighbour or two would have materially improved the solitary condition. To be sure, there were the cannibals; but they could hardly be said, in the strict sense of the word, to be animated by a neighbourly feeling. If Alexander Selkirk could have heard his sound of the "church-going bell," for which his ear thirsted, he would still have wanted a neighbour on the next rock, or the valley ten miles off, to call for on his way, and to return home with. But after all, their situation was only just as neighbourless as mine. True, this little suburban district is not a desert island; on the contrary, there is scarcely an acre of ground within a mile of my fireside, that is not thickly planted with brick and mortar, and houses come up faster than small salad; there is scarcely an edifice among the congregated specimens of eligible mansions and commodious residences that is not tenanted; and not a few of the vast number can boast of more than one set of inmates. But it is true, nevertheless, that I haven't a neighbour.

There are seasons, says Wordsworth, when the heart luxuriates with indifferent things, "wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones." I have often wasted mine on the statue of the Duke of York on Carlton-terrace,

and now watch the progress of the new column in Trafalgar-square with proportionate interest. Nelson will certainly prove a most desirable neighbour.

I have remarked that we are surrounded with houses, and that every one is tenanted; this is scarcely saying enough. A friend of mine (alas! he is no neighbour), whose family increases rapidly, is said to have such a "house full of children," that he *cannot shut the street-door for them.* If he did, they would be oozing out at the key-hole; and legs and arms, in inevitable submission to the law of physics, would be insinuating themselves out of the window, or escaping as by a safety-valve through the chimney. This appears to be equally the case with numerous residents in my vicinity. Lodger upon lodger, visitor upon visitor, each staying a twelvemonth, fill most of the buildings even to an overflow; but in all this multitude, is there no neighbour for me, not one.

The people next door are a charming family. They have resided there fifteen years, while my term of tenancy has been seventeen; but to speak of them as my neighbours, would be like speaking of the elasticity of cast-iron, or the saccharine attraction of a cranberry-tart. The family over the way, the Higgses (we *know* the name to be Higgs by the brass-plate on the door), well, they have lived almost opposite to us upwards of twelve years; and yet to expect a call from any one of the two dozen in family, to expect a "good morning," or any slight sign of neighbourly recognition, why, it would be as startling as the knock of a penny-postman at the door of Robinson Crusoe's cave.

The French have many generous and brilliant qualities; but I believe the chief reason why I am so partial to them is, not that they have sent us Rachel, but that they are always called "our lively neighbours."

Let it not be rashly imagined that I am utterly deserted and desolate. We have relations innumerable; some of them yet living can prove that they were in the Ark, and they have gone on increasing and multiplying ever since. But relations in Yorkshire, the Isle of France, Australia, Upper Canada, and New Zealand, are not exactly neighbours. As for the friends that we have the happiness to possess, they are like the tricks of conjurors, "too tedious to mention." We have them, as the hungry gentleman wanted to have the sandwiches at an evening party, "in swarms." But then, is it not as clear as a ball-room two minutes after supper is announced, that the best of friends are anything but neighbours, especially when they reside within a convenient distance!

We have numerous visitations from afar. If I happened to have a cousin in Kentucky, I'd bet the speculating reader a copy of the *New Monthly*, that he (the Kentuckian) would be smoking me out of house and home within a twelvemonth. Every man or boy, every maid, wife, or widow, connected with us by the remotest and most imaginary degree of consanguinity, can find the way in turn to our gate, and knows experimentally the precise degree of vigour which the bell-pull exacts to insure a prompt attendance upon the summons. They know whether our knocker's note is C in base, or C in treble. We have plenty of other people's neighbours; throughout the year we may rejoice, at intervals, in the flattering inquiries and voluntary domiciliations of friends and kindred from a distance, the neighbours probably of my own antipodes. But this occurs to everybody in turn. It is regulated by the principle on which every Londoner's country visitors clamber up St. Paul's, and thread the mazes of the Tower, while the Londoner himself does not. I have neither scaled

the Monument, nor dived into the Tunnel; never in my life, because I could perform the feat every day of my existence; and what I principally know concerning them is derived from the voluminous communications of statistical guests from distant countries or foreign lands.

They can give you the exact measurement of the architectural or antiquarian wonder; the width, the height, the proportion of the parts, in feet and inches; and add besides the date of the year when it was all done; all which told, without the abatement of a single figure of the account, they leave you to enjoy your head-ache, and travel back to the country, sensible perhaps of your hospitality, but shocked at your disgraceful want of ordinary information.

Ah! how vast is the difference between all such guests, and the social conveniences alluded to before, the neighbours! Relations are well enough, so long as they are not poor ones; and friends are of inestimable value, except perhaps when you want them to be of use to you; but if they are beyond immediate reach, it is too plain that they are not neighbours, and one good thing is not always a substitute for another. As an epic poem would prove but of slight utility in the place of a haunch of venison, so the exalted and exquisite sentiment of friendship is, in practical operation, but an ill substitute for the hourly-wanted accommodation of a neighbourly feeling.

What adds most acutely to the poignant sense which I entertain of this social grievance, my want of neighbours, is, that the people all round about appear to be such peculiarly nice people. The charming family opposite, and that next door, are but specimens of the general superiority. On our terrace there are almost twenty houses, and in the row over the way there are twenty-

five, and I don't think there is an exceptionable person amongst all the inhabitants, from the Bradleys to the Watkinsons. They seem to be the steadiest of husbands, the kindest of fathers, the fondest of grandpapas, the best of wives, mothers, sisters, or maiden aunts in the world; but they are such horribly bad neighbours. I do not mean of course that they are caught peeping over the blinds into one's bedroom, before one has quite time to get out of it in the morning; or that they flock to the windows whenever a longer and louder knock than usual is administered at our door by some more finished practitioner; they all seem perfectly indifferent whether, when the butcher comes, the servant takes in lamb or mutton; they hardly appear to know people's turbots from their brills; they never seem to count how many letters the postman brings daily, nor observe what visitors we have, nor notice at what late hours they may happen to go away; and I verily believe that if our ale-brewer were to send us an eighteen-gallon cask every week, the circumstance would fail to attract the smallest attention in this unobservant vicinity. A German friend sallied forth the first thing after breakfast the other morning, with a huge moustache and a long pipe in his mouth; and the maid-servant who was sweeping the steps of No. 16, never rested her chin upon the long-broom-handle for a single instant, nor even turned her head to stare at the phenomenon.

When I say, therefore, that they are bad neighbours, I mean that they are not neighbours at all. I only wish they would busy themselves about our affairs. Everything that could be done to entrap them into slight intimacies, or neighbourly interchanges of nods, has been tried long ago, until effort and hope are exhausted. There are the three ladylike Miss Moores, next door but one; I would give anything to break

through their reserve. I know they like a rubber on a winter evening; the youngest is past forty; but one might as well attempt to coax them into Crockford's as to draw them into a little neighbourly party with whist in our corner. To each other they are all smiles and sunshine, but they are icicles as neighbours. Overtaking them in a lane close by, the other evening, I purposely trod on the tail of their favourite spaniel, to give myself an opportunity, by a thousand apologies for my carelessness, of making their acquaintance; but they only bowed graciously, called "Pet! Pet!" observed that the little thing was always in the way, and made room for me to pass. I could not have remarked that it was a fine night, but I thought it would rain before morning, if my life had depended on it!

There's that fine good-humoured fellow at No. 6 over the way, with his twinkling eyes and rosy complexion; he's at home every evening, but how can I get him out? I wish he would trouble his head with what doesn't concern him. He sings capitally, and has been singing for years, as we have often heard when passing under the window; and of all things we want him to take a second in "Drink to me only," but I might as reasonably hope to get Lablache by the button. As his name resembles my own (so the old-fashioned brass plate shows; the only medium through which the mere names of our neighbours *can* be known to us), two or three misdirected letters, intended for me, have fallen into his hands; he sends them over with much promptitude and great politeness; yet it is as difficult to get a "fine day!" out of him when we meet, as it is out of November itself.

It is really comical to see how we miscellaneous residents hereabout meet each other on one of our favourite little promenades of an evening; on the stony

and not very spacious bank of a respectable pond, which has recently, thanks to its loyal and patriotic proprietor, been put in handsome order, and designated Lake Albert. Here we all parade up and down, first on this side of a row of trees and then on that; the "place" or the "terrace" on which we live being, at this time, more than half emptied of its tenants; and yet, amidst all the promenaders so assembled, there is not one single neighbourly soul that speaks to another. None of them let their left hands know what their right hands are doing. No. 2 does not so much as bow to No. 3; No. 4 seems utterly unconscious that No. 5 lives next door to him.

We are not birds of passage, observe, in our district; there are but few examples of tenants coming for a season and starting off again; on the contrary, most of us have been fixtures for the last twenty years, so that, meeting each other continually for half a life-time, our faces are all as familiar as our manners are reserved. We could all swear to each other's buttons and bonnet-ribbons; yet we walk and make no sign. Hundreds of times have I patted the heads of little masters, or touched with surpassing delicacy the chins of little maidens, in the hope of thawing their parents, and establishing, if not a neighbourly intercourse, yet an interchange of courtesies. All in vain. I have sometimes, by way of breaking the ice, meditated pushing one of the little boys into the pond; not far, but just so that I might instantly pull him out again; for the sake of seeing whether the deliverer of their darling would be recognised as a near neighbour. But curiosity never carried me so far, because I felt certain of the result. As a total stranger I should be overwhelmed with acknowledgments, and then become a total stranger again. The answer to inquiries next

morning would be, "Compliments; much obliged; going on very well, many thanks;" but no hint of any latent consciousness that the face of their darling's preserver was one which they had ever seen before, or were likely to meet again.

"Had I met it," says the Sentimentalist on his Journey, speaking of the head of the monk, "had I met it on the plains of Industan I had worshipped it." If one of my neighbours were to meet me there, we should not even nod to one another. I cannot say, with Orlando, "I desire that we may be better strangers," for that we cannot be.

At the play the other night, a family on our terrace came into the same box and shared the same seat with me. I raised it for them on their entrance, and picked up their playbill; other civilities passed: but throughout the long evening my companions betrayed, neither by look nor by word, a knowledge of the fact that we had all come from, and were all returning to, the same spot, and that ever since Midsummer, 1824, we had rarely been a stone's throw apart!

The scene which I most enjoy on the stage occurs in operas and melo-dramas, where troops of peasants come crowding on, the men in short red waistcoats and blue smalls, the women in abridged petticoats of every colour, all bustling together and shaking hands, or pairing off, arm in arm; with a Farmer Friendly joining them from his cottage, saying, "Come neighbours, neighbours!" receiving a welcome everywhere, and speaking to every creature, great or little, in the village. Those are exhibitions of *genuine nature*. They teach us to feel the full force of every neighbourly sentiment. They paint a true picture of what exists everywhere, except in my parish. I never witness that portion of the play without wishing that I had yielded, in early

life, to intense passion for the stage. I think I could have played one of those Farmer Friendlys to the life,—they are all so natural.

As we have frequent visitors in friends and family connexions, so even when quite alone we are not absolutely without resources. I should be sorry to be thought wholly dependent for the means of passing an agreeable evening on unknown and indeed non-existent neighbours. My wife and I have, to be sure, outgrown both cribbage and picquet; but we contrive to relish our whist pretty well by means of two open dummies. Still we are apt to feel, after an hour or two, rather provoked at the impossibility of ensnaring a pair of partners, out of all the elderlies that are playing rubbers round about. The evening passes off very delightfully; but then utter solitude is always the sweeter for having somebody by, to whom we may say "How delightful it is!"

We have once or twice meditated the expedient of making the children sit up late; inuring them to it from the cradle, so that they may do it without winking; it would be injurious to them no doubt, but it would be much more lively. Sometimes we vary the order of amusement by singing trios and duets, or arranging solos for two voices; for I don't dislike music so much when I take part in it; it is only listening that I object to. Occasionally too we act little domestic dramas; getting up, that is to say, just a slight friendly quarrel; a mere bickering in an affectionate way, to help the hours along; and now and then we have another variation of proceedings, by agreeing to fancy ourselves as slight acquaintances only, each regarding the other as merely a friendly visitor, preserving therefore the most respectful and attentive demeanour, drawing out our tastes and sentiments, our predilections and dislikings by degrees, and playing off all the little prettinesses of

speech and manner that would be properly called forth by a charming neighbour, paying the first visit and reluctant to depart. We find this semi-serious farce, sustained as it is by the most innocent flirtation, by way of by-play, to answer its purpose very well. So gravely is it carried on, that I sometimes end by offering to see my wife home to the next terrace. I only wish a neighbour or two would drop in to witness the performance.

A neighbour or two! Absurd! In *my* paradise, as in Adam's, there are none. I have relatives, friends, acquaintances, brother-electors and fellow-parishioners, but I have *no* neighbours.

SYMPTOMS OF THE MIND DISEASED:

CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HAMLET.

Is it, as a warning voice has this minute suggested, a little too late in the day to discuss the question whether Hamlet's wits were or were not disordered? We are persuaded that it is not. Nay, we know most surely that Hamlet can never be an exhausted subject of speculation while human nature remains inexhaustible. The profound truths of the character are entwined with the roots of some of humanity's very deepest secrets. The springs of our interest and wonder can never be dry.

We shall revive not a syllable of the much that has been said of old about this most exquisite and perfect of characters; we shall glance not at any one of those later opinions which the various beautiful editions of the poet's works, now in a course of publication, may contain; for these we have not read. Nor do we, according to the practice of the general Shakspearian admirer, who fondly believes that he has something new and striking to offer in exposition of the poet's genius, profess to hold

all the poet's commentators in contempt. Far otherwise. Our reverence for their acuteness stops on this side idolatry, yet taken as a body they must be regarded as an ill-used race of men. They have said more than enough to be sure, and yet less. Still they have said much to the purpose.

At a time when such a popular and fearful interest attaches to the question; not so much of absolute insanity, as of that partial estrangement of reason which exhibits many of its leading peculiarities (the condition of mind which it is the object of this paper to suggest as assignable to Hamlet), the reader may be at once invited to compare the principal traits in the character drawn by Shakspeare with the leading symptoms of a distemper described with singular exactness and particularity by Robert Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy." * Burton's Anatomy, it may be remarked, was not published until 1621, five years after Shakspeare's death; the poet's genius has therefore anticipated in the working of a certain malady of the mind a theory which Burton has propounded with great explicitness and subtlety, with various and singular knowledge both of books and of mankind.

We may premise that the mental distemper which Burton pictures to us, he calls "Melancholy." The word in the sense so attached to it is perhaps obsolete; monomania, estrangement of reason, sometimes eccentricity, are the terms generally substituted for it in these times; but that it was the designation of a malady, in Burton's view of the matter, not very distantly related

* This comparison has been made, and the view here taken elaborately and ingeniously worked out, in "The Nature and Extent of Poetic Licence, by N. A. Vigors, jun., Esq.," a volume published a quarter of a century ago. Those who may be acquainted with it will see how freely its suggestions and speculations are applied by the transcriber.

to lunacy, and constituting in truth a certain fitful and unsettled quality of mind, seems as clear, as that the symptoms of the disorder are identical with the chief peculiarities of Hamlet.

We shall enumerate the leading features of the distemper; they are sorrow, distaste of life, love of solitude, a mixture of mirth and grief, suspicion, bursts of passion, inconstancy and irresolution.

In the foreground of these symptoms is *Sorrow*, the principal characteristic of the malady, and the source in which all its other peculiarities originate.

"Sorrow," says Burton, "is that character and inseparable companion, a common symtome, a continual sorrow sticks by them still, continually gnawing, as the vulture did Tityus' bowels, and they cannot avoid it. *Lugubris Ate* frowns upon them, insomuch that Aretæus well calls it, 'a vexation of the mind, a perpetual agony'." Hamlet, who seems ever with his vailèd eyes to seek his noble father in the dust, is exhibited from his first introduction as one bowed down by this Sorrow; as one whom Melancholy has marked for her own. We discern at once that there 's something in his soul o'er which his melancholy sits on brood. He has that within that passeth show. His disposition naturally pensive and retired, is operated upon, not merely by his father's death, but by the insult offered to his memory, and appears to yield to a deep and settled sadness. He is absorbed in his affections. Between him and enjoyment there is an insuperable and eternal bar. The world presents but a vacuity to his weary gaze. Along its barren paths he sees no object of relief or consolation. In him even love itself is blind indeed, and the very image of Ophelia fails to lighten up the deep shadow which is around him. In his first soliloquy, he declares with affecting solemnity that all the uses of the world seem

to him weary, stale, and unprofitable; and he afterwards tells his friends that he has lost all his mirth, neglected all exercises, that the earth is but as a barren promontory, and the firmament with its golden fires but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapour.

It is natural that another symptom should arise out of this—*Weariness and Distaste of Life.* The judgment is sickened and vitiated under this weight that oppresses the heart, and turns with disrelish and loathing from every object of existence.

"Hence," says Burton, "it proceeds many times that they are weary of their lives; and ferall thoughts, to offer violence to their persons, come into their mindes. *Tædium vitæ* is a common symtome, they are soon tyred of all things." Thus Hamlet the instant he is alone gives vent to his weariness and distate of life—

> Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst *self slaughter.*

His total disregard of life he expresses to Horatio and Marcellus—

> I do not set my life at a pin's fee.

And the point to which tends the only hope he has, to end all his griefs in the grave, is seen in his answers to Polonius, though intended to be light and unmeaning.

> POLONIUS.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?
> HAMLET.—*Into my grave.*
> POLONIUS.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.
> HAMLET.—Sir, you cannot take from me any thing I will more willingly part withal; *except my life,* except my life, except my life.

Nay, he afterwards debates the question, *to be or not to be;* and here it may be remarked, as something tending to show the state of mind under which Hamlet

labours while he thus meditates, that the whole debate is a superfluity, an anti-climax, and involves either a strange oversight on the part of the author (which is scarcely conceivable), or else a symptom of mental estrangement on the part of Hamlet. He goes on to reason himself into a belief that to die is to sleep, no more; that this sleep ends the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to; that it is a consummation devoutly to be wished; when he had held a conference the night before with an expositor of the very mysteries of death, the shadowy discoverer of the marvels of the Aftertime.

"To sleep," he reiterates, "*perchance* to dream; for in that sleep of death what dreams *may* come, must give us pause."

But the time for speculating and supposing thus had gone by. Purgatory was no longer problematical. He speaks as he would have spoken the year before, of "the dread *something* after death, the undiscovered country." But the something had been explained to him; the horrible secrets of the prison-house had been more than hinted at, though all was forbidden to be revealed; he had heard all that ears of flesh and blood might listen to; he had been apprised of the awful penalty; he had been warned of the "sulphurous and tormenting flames" that must burn and purge away the foul deeds done in the days of life. When he decides upon rather bearing the ills he has, than fly to others that he *knows not of*, he seems to forget the foreknowledge of them contained in the appalling revelation of the ghost. True, he has his doubts sometimes of the integrity of the spirit that he has seen, and admits that it "may be a devil," that "abuses him to damn him;" but this supposition is equally fatal to the propriety and fitness of his speculations upon death as a quiet sleep that is to end the heart-ache, and he never for an instant doubts that

he *has* seen and heard a supernatural agent, whatsoever its object and whencesoever it might come. The heart of the mystery has been plucked out; yet though his malady makes him for the moment unconscious of it, he can reason upon the great subject with a happiness which sanity very often (as Polonius says) "could not so prosperously be delivered of."

We come to another distinguishing trait of Hamlet's mental infirmity—*Love of Solitude*. Burton observes:

"Most part they are diffident, of small or no complement, unsociable, hard to be acquainted with, especially of strangers; they had rather write their minds than speak, and above all things love solitariness. Generally, thus much we may conclude of melancholy, that it is most pleasant, *mentis gratissimus error*, a most delightsome humour to be alone, dwell alone, walk alone, meditate, and form a thousand fantastical imaginations unto themselves."

The number of soliloquies in which Hamlet indulges is noticeable even by the unthinking play-goer. They are more frequent than in any other of Shakspeare's dramas. The love of solitude is especially congenial to his disposition. He seizes every opportunity of being alone, that he may give vent to feelings which he can only indulge in secret.

"Break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue," he exclaims, stifling his emotions, when his friends break in upon him. Indeed he is at some pains to seek occasions for privacy. A few of the instances may be noticed. His impatience at the presence of Polonius:

POLONIUS.—Fare you well, my lord.
HAMLET.—These tedious old fools.

When struck with the feigned passion of the players, contrasting it with his own irresolution, he seeks once more to brood in secret, and bids them all retire. "'Tis

well, I 'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon," &c. "*Now I am alone.*" Afterwards he responds to his mother's desire to see him: "I will come by and by."

POLONIUS.—I will say so.
HAMLET.—By and by is easily said. *Leave me, friends.*

And again when the report of the Norwegian captain seems to inform against him and spur his dull revenge: "I humbly thank you, sir."

CAPTAIN.—God be wi' you, sir. (*Exit.*)
ROS.—Wilt please you go, my lord?
HAMLET.—I will be with you straight, *go a little before.*

As for "rather writing their minds than speak," as Burton says, no less than three of Hamlet's letters are read during the play, and Ophelia returns him a packet addressed to her.

A mixture of Mirth and Sorrow, of humorous conceit and settled sadness, is defined by Burton to be another peculiar symptom of this disease. He thus expresses himself:

"Humourous they are beyond all measure, sometimes profusely laughing, extraordinary merry, and then again weeping without a cause; and though they laugh many times, and seem to be extraordinary merry (as they will by fits) yet extreme lumpish again in an instant; *semel et simul,* merry and sad, but most part sad."

Hamlet deigns to sport with the afflictions which weigh heaviest upon his heart, with events of the most bewildering and agonising character. Answering Horatio's observation that he came to see his father's funeral, he says in reference to the wedding that followed: "Thrift, thrift, Horatio; the funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables." But almost in the same breath he relapses into his original gloominess:

> Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven,
> Or ever I had seen that day.

The same feelings are evinced, and the same transition from the humorous to the solemn is observed in his answers to Horatio's questions relative to the ghost; and his reference to the change of place of "truepenny," "old mole," the "fellow in the cellarage," when he proposes the oath of secrecy to his friends, which he nevertheless receives with a pathetic sacredness, "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit."

This singular mixture is noticeable in almost every scene; for examples it is only necessary to point to the ludicrous style in which he indulges on the breaking up of the dramatic experiment on the conscience of the king, and to the extraordinary blending of humour, solemnity, and pathos, over the grave of Ophelia; all indicative of the same disposition.

Burton regards *Suspicion* as another distinguishing sign of this peculiar malady.

"Suspicion and jealousie," says he, "are general symtomes; they are commonly distrustful; if two talk together, whisper, jest, he thinks presently they mean him, applyes all to himself. He cannot endure any man to look steadily on him, laugh, jest, or be familiar. He thinks they laugh at him, circumvent him, contemn him. Suspition follows fear and sorrow at heels, arising out of the same fountain, and still they suspect some treachery."

In this we trace a characteristic of Hamlet minutely described. His prophetic soul was bursting with a suspicion of his uncle's guilt long before the ghost gave evidence; he suspects all through the play; and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern call the feeling into action, just as Burton describes it. Hamlet not only suspects the

motive of their coming, but is roused to indignation by their smiles.

HAMLET. Man delights not me, nor woman neither; though by your *smiling* you seem to say so.

ROS. There is no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET. Why did you *laugh* then, when I said man delights not me?

He discovers his antipathy to the smile of which Burton discourses on other occasions, and seems to think it but a mask for treachery and baseness. How paints he, in his bitterest hatred, the king's aspect?

> Oh, villain, villain, *smiling*, damned villain!
> My tablet, meet it is I set it down;
> That one *may smile, and smile, and be a villain.*

And with regard to circumvention, the suspicion of it recurs often. He takes constant pleasure in plotting and counterplotting: as in the grand assumption, the feigning of madness; in the scheme of the play; in the enjoyment he feels when his two schoolfellows "marshal him to knavery;" when he exults in breaking open the letters; and finds it sweet, that "in one line two crafts together meet." To trace this quality of suspicion, and the use of these desperate means of circumvention, to a mind not free from the ravages of a distemper, is to escape the shock with which we must otherwise be visited in contemplating this portion of the strategy of Hamlet.

We next have *Inconstancy and Irresolution* as indications of the mind thus pitiably diseased.

"Inconstant they are in all their actions, vertiginous, restless, unapt to resolve of any business; in most things wavering, irresolute. He will freely promise, undertake any business beforehand, but when it comes to be performed he dare not adventure."

This quality, like the others, is too conspicuous in

Hamlet to require many proofs. He will and he will not. Ever conscious of his procrastination, he is ever about to work out his ends. Resolute, he is still inconstant to his purpose. Although his father's spirit has given him "dread command" to take revenge for fratricide, he waits for another ghostly visitation—

> Dost thou not come thy *tardy* son to chide?

The players awaken in him self-reproaches, when he sees how passion works in them, while it moves him in vain; he "can do nothing." Even when the moment for long-restrained vengeance upon his uncle seems to have arrived,

> Now could I do it pat, now he is praying,
> And now I 'll do 't;

he but speaks daggers and uses none; it is never the right time. His purpose becomes "almost blunted," and he quits Denmark only to feel, on view of the Norwegian armament, "this thing 's to do," and that all occasions inform against him, and spur his dull revenge. All his thoughts are thenceforth to be "bloody or nothing worth;" yet they still evaporate in words, and the death of the king occurs after all incidentally, the agent having a motive furnished him utterly unassociated with his father's murder.

Burton also classes among the symptoms of the malady he analyses, sudden and violent *Bursts of Passion*. "Extreme passionate they are," says he; and Hamlet's mind, strongly agitated, often overflows without restraint. His soliloquies contain one or two examples. Into what a fury he burst after the departure of the players, when he denounces himself as "pigeon-livered," or ere this,

> I should have fatted all the region kites
> With this slave's offal,

raving till he is exhausted. His passion overpowers

him, and his language becomes wild and frantic, when describing to his mother the atrocities of her "king of shreds and patches," "a murderer and a villain," "a slave," "a vice of kings," "a cutpurse of the empire and the rule." A distracted impulse occasions the death of Polonius, and a similar frenzy begets the outrage at Ophelia's grave, where he puts himself into the "towering passion" of which he afterwards repents.

That *Wit and Judgment* are not inconsistent with the melancholy which is Hamlet's malady is seen in another observation of Burton.

"Men infected with this disease are of a deep reach, excellent apprehension, judicious, wise, and witty. They are of profound judgment in some things, although in others *non recte judicant inquieti.*"

How Hamlet answers to this description all can judge; and as the writer whose views we have adopted notices, how admirably has Cervantes supported this mixture of judgment and eccentricity in his "Don Quixote."

Numberless indications, judging by the principle laid down by Burton, of Hamlet's disordered state of mind might be adduced, but enough perhaps has been said to exhibit a conformity between the anatomist and the dramatist. Grant that the one has truly described a disease of the mind, and it may be granted perhaps that the other has accurately delineated a martyr to it. Little more was wanting to the wonderful truth of the poet's conception than to make the victim confess his own weakness.

> The spirit that I have seen
> May be a devil, and the devil hath power
> To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
> *Out of my weakness and my melancholy,*
> *As he is very potent with such spirits,*
> Abuses me to damn me.

For Burton says,

"Agrippa and Lavater are persuaded that this humour invites the divil to it wheresoever it is in extremity; and of all others these persons are most subject to diabolical temptations and illusions, and the divil best able to work upon them."

A symptom, moreover, of this species of insanity may be detected even in the feigning of madness; as a consciousness of a little weakness may suggest the assumption of a greater, to hide its inconsistencies in a show of eccentricity. The suddenness of Hamlet's resolve favours this argument; as upon the vanishing of the ghost he takes out his tables and writes, and rails at the "smiling villain," with "so, uncle, there you are;" then calling to his friends, "Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come bird, come!" he intimates that he may hereafter see fit "to put an *antic* disposition on." The uselessness of the artifice, for the feigned madness furthers no purpose of Hamlet's, pushes the argument further.

Above all, perhaps, when we consider the delicate texture of Hamlet's mind, his extreme refinement and overwrought sensibility, is it wonderful that its fabric should be warped and disordered under the pressure of the painful news of his father's sudden death, the shame of his mother's infamous marriage, followed by an awful revelation from the grave, of its ghostly secrets and the mysteries of the Hereafter? Rather, would it not be wonderful, unnatural even, if the sweet bells were not jangled and out of tune, if the noble mind of Hamlet were not rendered a prey to that pitiable distemper, of which Burton has so distinctly recorded the curious anatomy!

MY DREAM AT HOP-LODGE.

WHEN I was in Kent, last spring, on a visit to the friendly owner of Hop-lodge, in that county, I remarked that all the ladies of the family devoted their leisure hours to the same occupation. In a spirit of unanimity never before seen, except on the stage, all entered with enthusiasm into the same amusement; it was *not* scandal.

My friend's lively, warm-hearted wife; her sister and his sister; together with the little bright-eyed daughter not sixteen; and an ancient dame, distantly related to all the rest; nay, even the governess, at intervals; seemed to take a placid delight, hour by hour, in tearing up old letters, notes, envelopes, and other remnants of manuscript into small pieces, not much larger than a silver penny, and dropping them, by little handfuls, into little baskets beside them.

Every dull morning after breakfast, and every dance-less evening after tea, the conversation was carried on to the monotonous accompaniment of a sharp, quick, rustling sound, produced by the continual tearing up of writing paper, of many qualities and sizes; some so crisp and so substantial that simply unfolding it would elicit a crackling noise, while reducing it to fragments caused a sound equal to that of a fine saw. So loud was it, at times, that the very postman's knock, announcing the arrival of a fresh supply of epistles, to be condemned, in due season, could hardly have been heard.

Enter the ordinary sitting-room when one would, there sate the lady of the house, emulating upon sheets

of paper the experiments of M'Adam upon blocks of granite; the M'Eve, we may designate her, of foolscap and demy. With hands almost as white as the material they demolished, she pleasantly pursued her task of destruction, letting fall into the basket a tiny handful of little pieces every minute. She looked, in her gaiety and beauty, like a laughing Juno, who had resolved to possess herself of a silver shower to match Jove's golden one.

Chariest of the chary in all matters which relate to ladies, married or single, I should as soon have thought of asking them to let me read one of the letters they were tearing up, as of questioning them as to the intended appropriation of those epistolary particles. So I watched the white hands plying their trade, I listened to the crumpling and crushing of paper day by day, but uttered not a word of inquiry. "It was," as Mr. Pepys remarks, "pretty to see."

One cannot interrogate a lady as to the destination of that thirty-second bead bag, which she is slowly manufacturing; nor ask the name of the gentleman for whom she is, with heroic fortitude, knitting that extremely protracted purse; nor wonder to her face why on earth she gives herself the trouble of spoiling that velvet by covering it with such crowds of coloured disfigurements. As little could one ask her, when intently and constantly occupied, what she meant to do with those multitudinous scraps of paper. I could, with equal delicacy, have inquired whom the letters came from!

It was enough that the occupation or the amusement seemed intellectually analogous to the more current performances with garnets and gold thread, in satin-stitch and water-colours, or upon lace-collars and fancy-bags; idle labours often, and most forlorn recreations,

which make so many ladies' lives like unto a gay, light, loosely-knitted silken purse, without any money in it!

Of course I had my private speculations concerning the ends for which those myriads of minute fragments were provided. I conjectured that some wise man, justly abhorring long epistles, might have devised a plan of administering homœopathic letters, inditing notes infinitesimally. Again, I had a notion that the drama of the "Exiles of Siberia" was about to be revived, and that the young ladies, great admirers of Mr. Macready, were anxious to make that gentleman a present of a severe snow-storm on the occasion.

On taking my departure, the most elderly of the ladies pleaded for the rest: "Had I any waste sheets of writing-paper, outside scraps, useless business-letters, lithographed circulars, fly-leaves of notes, or old envelopes? their stock was running low, and before the fine weather had quite set in, they should be left with nothing in the world to do." Nothing in the world to do but to tear up writing-paper into fragments no larger than silver pennies! Still it remained a question whether the fancy for destroying letters in that way might not be both wiser and pleasanter than a passion for writing them; and as I had recently contributed a large packet of old postage-stamps in aid of the funds for building a new church,* so I resolved to let a huge pile of the letters themselves follow; for which I received a profusion of thanks, and another invitation to Hop-lodge.

It was in the autumn that I paid my second visit; and arriving at night, after riding some miles, jaded and sleepy, I was truly glad to retire at the earliest moment to rest. Had my pillow been a pillow of flints,

* Vide newspapers.

the hardness would have been totally unfelt, for both eyes were close-sealed before I could fairly lie down.

It would be more correct to say that my lids, rather than their tenants, were close-sealed; for the eyes themselves began now to see extremely well, rolling inwardly about in quest of things visionary. Perhaps I was a little too tired for sound and dreamless slumber; my legs, cramped and weary as they were, would be still in motion; and so, like a man upon his oath, I could not lie with any comfort.

Still I was asleep; but how long sleep's reign, disturbed or not, had lasted, is very doubtful, when I heard, "in my dreaming ear," the one next the pillow, a little crackling, rustling round, as of the rending or rumpling of paper, considerably firmer in its texture and substance than bank-notes. Yes, those peculiar noises, whether born in the brain, or having their existence actually within the pillow, as they appeared to have, resembled nothing else out of fairy-land. Millions of full-sized letters, oblong, and swarms of civil little notes, three-cornered, seemed heaped, by supernatural hands, under my head, in pieces equally countless and minute.

Perfectly still, I lay and listened. My downward ear seemed to draw in the sounds from the very interior of the pillow on which my head was now throbbing with surprise; and at every movement I made, there was an increased rustle; not so sharp, by a thousand degrees, yet in tone not unlike the crashing of tender forest-branches, or the clatter of little shells and pebbles washed upon the beech.

Was the magic noise engendered in the air? Was it a most novel and untuneful singing in my own head? Or had the down, wherewith my pillow was filled, acquired that faculty of voice which the birds, from

whom it had been plucked, had forfeited? Assuredly I could not have been more startled, had forty flocks of plucked geese come cackling round my bed, crying, "Give us back our feathers!"

Again, I suspended my breathing, and hushed myself into an intense fit of listening. There, still, were the small crisp noises just under my ear, oozing apparently upward from the pillow as clearly as drops of water would have trickled through it. And it was still a sound as of the tearing and crumpling of many quires of paper. A bank clerk, pulling, pinching, and whisking about piles of notes, from nine to five daily, would make less noise in a week.

I began to suspect that the fairies were playing pranks under my head; that Oberon and Titania had been tearing up all the letters which had passed between them during their last quarrel; and that their small-fingered subjects were scrambling for the tiniest pieces, to fold up, three-cornerwise, and send as love-notes or challenges to one another.

Perplexed past endurance, and finding, upon repeated trials, that either ear, the instant it was placed to the pillow, caught sounds as audibly as it would through the keyhole of a quiet family's nursery, I changed my position, and dreaming that I was wide awake (perhaps I was), looked desperately upward through the darkness at the invisible ceiling of the room; when what was my amazement to behold, in less than the sixtieth part of an instant, a thick shower of very little bits of paper descending on every side: some of a creamy hue, some bluish, some rather pinky; wire-wove, or glazed, gilt-edged or sable-bordered; but all falling about me like snow-flakes, or hovering over me like white feathers, which rather floated than fell.

"Did I ever?" was the question which I silently asked myself in my dream.

My eyes, at this strange spectacle, started far out of my head, and glowed with an unnatural light; by the aid of which, as by that of a pair of long fours, I was indeed enabled to view the scene. Nor was the fire that burned in them useless; for, as the fragments of paper descended, the more I gazed at them, the plainer I could see that they were all written upon, possibly by that process, which requires warmth to give legible effect to it. They were bits of letters, every one; indited by many hands, and addressed to many persons, on subjects without number.

Fast and faster yet they fell, each one bearing its little word or syllable, or at least the tail of a *g*, or an *i*'s dot, until presently the room began to fill, and the fragments crowded together seemed to attach themselves to one another. In a few minutes, perhaps fifty of them would have adhered, and formed a sort of sheet; and then another flock of flakes, descending from various points, would get into companionship, and so unite; and thus they floated above me, as I gazed upwards, like fleecy clouds, of a rather square and formal pattern, it is true, and scribbled mysteriously all over.

I could now plainly discern, as they hovered near me, that the mingled multitude of scraps, the tattered and scattered remains of so much correspondence, had again formed themselves into letters; yes, into readable epistles; though they had certainly not re-assumed their original shapes, or revived themselves *verbatim et literatim*. As on a field of battle, where a gallant soldier's body is apt to be buried with another gallant soldier's head; or, should his legs have been carried away, he is haply interred with the lower extremities of a veteran who belonged to a different regiment; so here I could perceive that many of the fragments had fallen

into strange company, and attached themselves to pieces to which they bore no epistolary relation.

Thus on one sheet which descended into my hand, I saw that the writing was throughout the same, but the beginning and the end had been written at different periods: the first sentences seemed traced with a quill whose ink was as generous wine to communicate joy; but the latter part had been scrawled with a steel pen dipped in gall. It began with overflowing friendship, wondering what the writer would not gladly sacrifice for him whom he addressed; but it terminated with civil regrets for altered circumstances, and a formal "I have the honour to remain."

I caught the first lines of a love-letter, they were rapturous. Love was life; it included all of happiness the world contains, and every word expressed the writer's conviction that wealth is dross, and parental consent a superfluity; but a discrepancy ensued, for there was something at the close about the necessity of an ample fortune, the charm of filial obedience, and the proud duty imposed upon young hearts of tearing themselves asunder, and seeking happiness somewhere else, "remaining ever," &c.

Here the right persons were associated in the rejoined letters, but with the terrible disadvantage of wrong dates. In other cases, I detected mutilated notes in one hand-writing—a lady's, but evidently addressed to two different persons, thus:

"My dearest Jemima, let nothing prevent you from coming; remember, it is my birthday, and without *you* what felicity could be mine? How exquisite is a pure sympathy between minds such as ours! Come in your blue lutestring; nothing becomes you half so much. You must forgive me for asking that treacherous thing, Julia; I can't help it. . . . . All will go wrong with-

out *you*, and so I rely. But how should I hesitate at anytime to confide in heavenly truth like yours? the worst of it is, that odious Jemima will, I fear, be with us, flirting in her horrid blue lutestring. But let the joy of a friendship like ours be unclouded by a thought of such intrusions. Ever, my dearest Julia," &c.

There was one at which, as it caught my eye, I laughed so loudly, as to be in great fear of waking myself. What added to the oddity of it was, that it was addressed to a particular friend of my own, but in two different hands; and thus it ran:

"My dear sir, will you give us the pleasure of your company at dinner? or proceedings will be taken against you without further notice. Yours, &c., Rasp and Clerk."

The next epistle came fluttering by, as if half ashamed of itself; yet it was full of virtuous sentiments, clad in the best Latin of the best authors, and painted the youthful writer's studious, respectable, and devout college life to the eyes of a liberal, but grave and dignified uncle. It was clear, however, that a wrong postscript had affixed itself to this letter to the tune of—

"P. S. Come down, Jack, and blow a cloud with us. I've a case or two of good things, and lots o' tin from Uncle Starch; but come at once, my Flanders brick, for these infernal duns are grabbing at it like blazes."

A lady's hand-writing again attracted my gaze, but here there was an anomaly relative to dates. "*July 20th*—As for Adolphus, as you call him, he is detestable. Was there ever such a conceited fright! I would not have him if there were not another man in the world. . . For I must frankly confess that my whole heart is in this engagement, and that without Adolphus existence would be a blank, *August 21st*."

Among the thousands floating about, I caught one in a schoolboy's hand; the first portion written like copper-plate, the latter upon the pothook plan, but the whole addressed to a revered parent:

"Honoured father,—The happy season has returned when filial affection finds its proudest gratification in reporting to beloved parents the progress of those intellectual, moral, and religious studies, which it is the blessed privilege of your son to enjoy at Birch-grove. For the bodily as well as mental improvement, which I trust on my return at Christmas you will be able to recognise, I am indebted to that judicious kindness which placed me under the tender and enlightened care of my present preceptor. . . . Aunt will giv you this she sez, and i wish you may git it, for I want some more Marmalaid and also a cake, for they keep me so Hungrey I cant lern nothing, also a large piece of tinn to put at the back of my Westcot, for I dont like the jolly wackings thats going on here; and I dont mean to come Back I can tell you, and Aunt says I sharnt, but as I have got sum Curran jam I shall conclude, so good by, dear papa, your affectionate son Nixy, short for Nicholas."

I had another fit of laughter, which nearly woke me, on solving another riddle, a note, commencing with expressions of the most delicate and idolatrous love, suddenly turning into cold business matters, and ending with "now don't make a fool of yourself by sitting up again, for I shall be late." The last lines were part of a letter written after marriage, the first were not. Specimens of this class were plentiful.

I was also tickled with the absurdity of an aristocratic order to a tradesman to send in his account without delay, terminating with "assurances of most distin-

guished consideration;" and a note to Mr. Buckstone, requesting orders for the theatre, might be seen gravely commencing with "Reverend sir."

Of the countless quires of paper which, in separate sheets, fluttered and fell around me, there was not a note without its grave or ridiculous contradiction. Some false fragments had engrafted themselves even on the truest stock, while in others some few scraps were wanting, leaving little holes in the epistle where the sincerity seemed to have dropped out. Here an affecting lecture on the solemn duties and flimsy vanities of life was cut up by an intruding inquiry, "Where the very best green silk twist is to be got," as the writer would "give the world to know;" and two or three lively notes, containing the particulars of a wedding, had been eked out with pieces bearing a mourning border; which possibly might not be altogether misplaced after all.

Here and there, I perceived a letter, in which the stray scraps and remnants had met together without any order or ceremony, so that there was not the slightest pretension to meaning in the entire document. Yet it did not appear to be much inferior in style to many letters which are daily marked "confidential" or "immediate" by charming correspondents.

A terrible exposure was going on around me. Every sheet was a witness against somebody. Here Pride was unmasked, by the union of two halves of letters, one dated from a hovel, the other from a hall; there, Honesty was proved a scamp, by confessing in a post-script what the letter denied. Here Sincerity was stamped hypocrite, by the junction of praise and censure under its own hand; and there, Benevolence was convicted of subscribing to a public fund, and having

"nothing to give away" in private. In each and all lurked some anomaly, harmless or criminal.

The confusion at length totally obscured my senses; and I could read no more. The letters broke up again into flakes, the flakes melted into the darkness like snow, and I slept in serene unconsciousness till ten. The secret came out at breakfast in much tender concern about my night's rest. Had I slept? Could I forgive such forgetfulness?

"The ladies here," said my friend, in explanation, "fear that you may have quarrelled with your pillow. They are fond of making *paper pillows* for the poor and the invalided; and of those being placed in readiness upon your bed, nobody remembered it until you were fast asleep."

A Paper Pillow! And I had been dreaming the family-secrets; reading, in my sleep, the family-correspondence! There was a slumbering indelicacy in the very idea! I uttered no remonstrance against the cheap and charitable invention; but however cool and soothing may be the paper pillow to some, I reflected, for my own part, that there was much practical wisdom, and a most exact and admirable simile in that pretty saying of King Once-upon-a-time—

"I'll to my couch; *like me, a downy one!*"

THE NINETY-NINE GOOD TURNS.

"Blessed are they who have favours to bestow, for they shall be shunned of no man!"

Thus spoke my cynical friend the other day, when he had just vainly sought an audience of some great per-

sonage, who, besieged with suppliants, was unapproachable accordingly.

My cynical friend knew little of mankind. People who have favours to bestow will always be shunned by two classes. By those, first, who, out of a false pride and an enormous self-conceit, regard every acceptance of a favour as a compromise of independence; and who associate the instinct of gratitude for kindness rendered, with a degrading admission of inferiority. Next by those, who having been laden with bounties and services, freely bestowed, on ninety-nine occasions, are refused the expected and customary boon upon the hundredth.

As the malignant nature can never forgive the innocent being it has injured, so the ungrateful nature cannot forgive the generous man who has served it. Strange, that among the inconsistencies of which we are made up, one so gross as ingratitude should be found; seeing that the grateful feeling implies, not a sense of inferiority, but the conviction that somebody has thought us worthy of sympathy, and entitled by desert to kindness.

Not less strangely inconsistent is it, that one who is thankful in his heart for a single service, should be ungrateful for a long-continued series. Such, too frequently, is he who fails to obtain the hundredth favour.

Show him, at the outset of your acquaintance, a little courtesy; offer him your opera-glass or your snuff-box; write him what is called a civil note when there is no absolute necessity for doing so; and he will trumpet your praises as one of the most gracious of mankind. Proceed from small civilities to essential benefits; heap favour upon favour on him; go out of your way to evince an anxiety for the promotion of his interests, the gratification of his desires; extend your

disinterested kindness from himself to his family; get an appointment for his eldest boy, and reconcile a high family to a match with his daughter; invent a new hair-dye expressly to accommodate his wife, and lose a guinea a night to him at whist, the whole season round; bind him more and more tightly in obligations to you, and hear him proclaim you, nine times a day, for nine years, the best friend he ever had in the world; the most generous of mortals, the noblest of benefactors; and then, at the very moment when he is your own for ever, only just refuse to lend him your gun, or your horse, or tell him that you could not think of writing to the Review to solicit a puff of his new pamphlet, that's all!

How, in such a case, will the grateful fellow, to whom you have rendered the ninety-nine good turns, turn round upon you! He will teach you, in no time, a curious lesson, that it takes years to confer obligations, but only moments to forget them. Why, he will undertake to forget, on the very spot, all that you have done for him; all that he has said of you. He will, at the shortest notice, recollect nothing concerning you but your refusal to oblige him in the very trifling matter wherein he had calculated upon your assistance.

You dragged him out of the river once, saving his life at the risk of your own; you lent him a thousand pounds; you introduced him to all the connexions in which he finds the best charms of society. Does he remember one of these little incidents? No; he only recollects that you yesterday refused to buy a share or two in the crazy speculation he was so rashly concerned in.

You snatched him out of a gambler's nest, just in time to save him from ruin; you chivalrously upheld him when he was traduced, and effected his admission

into the club, when an extra blackball would have had a damaging effect upon his reputation. Does he now bear these little services vividly in mind? No; he only bears in mind that you positively declined to take his three gawky nieces to the opera, and distinctly refused to ask that most inveterate of bores, his wife's brother, to stay a fortnight with you in the country.

You have all but fed and clothed him from infancy; does he, all on a sudden, forget this slight obligation? Yes, utterly; you have had a dinner-party that did not include him.

And what tone does he adopt now, when he speaks of the "most generous of men," of the "best friend he ever had in the world?" Oh, the tone of an injured man, to be sure; of a man slow to resent, reluctant to speak out, but deeply injured! "Ah! my dear madam," he remarks to Mrs. Blab, "I thought as you do once; I would have staked my honour on that man's friendship and liberality; but the mean mind, you know, *will* betray itself. Only think of his refusing to give young Scamp (a relation of mine by marriage), who wants a few suits of clothes, such a simple thing as an introduction to his tailor!" "Shame!" cries Mrs. Blab, on the part of the whole town; "this to you, too, who have been such a friend to him; who have ever spoken of him so highly; to whom he is under so many obligations!"

The receiver of the ninety-nine good turns is not ungrateful at an earlier stage of the obligation. His gratitude never breaks down until it is past the point where the demand for it is higher than ever.

He has been so long accustomed to receive favours, that a temporary stoppage stuns him; and he recovers his senses only to feel that he has been cruelly ill-treated. Hitherto, to ask has been to have; the denial, therefore, seems so strange, so wanton, so unprovoked,

that it cancels the recollection of every debt, and turns honey into gall.

When we hear one, with malice and disappointment breathing in every word, imputing to an absent person every disobliging quality, it is not uncharitable to surmise that the absentee had done him many good turns and then stopped. When we have listened a long hour to a fierce railer, who, having fastened his teeth on the character of an old acquaintance, tears it to tatters; who is ready to swear that no particle of kindliness or generosity lurks within the man; who rates him as the impersonation of all meanness and covetousness; it is not always unfair to ask, "How long is it since you first began to borrow of him? and on what day this week did he decline to lend you the guinea?"

Whenever I find any one unusually bitter and boisterous in his denunciations of "man's inhumanity to man," exhibited in a case of personal experience, the declaimer appearing as the victim, I am apt enough to think, "Now, here is a gentleman who wanted the hundredth good turn, but could not get it."

It behoves us surely to take care, when we censure another as incapable of rendering a single service, that we do not mean the hundredth. Many honest natures, that would blush to be deficient in the acknowledgment of kindness, have been precipitated, by an uxexpected refusal, into a total unconsciousness of countless benefits received. There is, it must be owned, something exasperating in this sudden turning-off at the hundredth turn. One is uneasy at receiving ninety-nine obligations and a point-blank denial. Custom has become our second nature, and a repulse seems a wrong. We feel that our benefactor ought to have no will in the matter; that he has a *right* to comply with our modest little application to give a large party expressly to please

a few particular friends of ours whom he is to ask. Non-compliance dashes us down from the high ladder, when we have attained the last stave but one. Just at the top of the steep ascent, we slip and roll to the bottom when we least dream of it. We had made sure, and feel sore. *Et tu, Brute!* we cry. The well that was always brim-full, to find not a drop in it at last! The tree that dropped its ripe fruits for us as we approached, to be barren suddenly! Why, the well that was always empty, the tree that never bore at all, are taken into favour in preference. There is forgiveness for the man who refused at first to stir a foot in our cause, and kept his word; but there is none for him who, having walked a thousand miles to serve us, now declines to move an inch at the bidding of our caprice. Our self-love is wounded by the discovery that we cannot dictate to him; and with pride hurt, we inconsistently humble ourselves to the dust, degraded by the disavowal of obligations we can no longer command.

Even when the spirit of exaction, defeated after many victories, expresses its sense of disappointment in a milder and less revengeful form, it still fails not to draw a distinction between the one who was never obliging, and the one who was always obliging till now, to the prejudice of the last. A favour is received from an unexpected quarter:—"This," we cry, "is most kind, most generous, most noble; *he never did me a good turn before.*" A favour is withheld in a quarter where it was anticipated: "This," we cry, "is unkind to the last degree, most unworthy, most pitiful; *he never hesitated to render me a kindness before.*" Non-desert in the one case makes the single good deed lustrous; desert in the other gives to the solitary refusal the blackness of an irreparable injury.

No man can be perfectly sure that he has not within

him the seeds of an ungrateful scoundrel, until he has been refused the hundredth good turn. If true there, he is a true man.

SENTENCES ON SIMILES.

HAM. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in the shape of a camel?
POL. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.
HAM. Methinks it is like a weasel.
POL. It is backed like a weasel.
HAM. Or like a whale.
POL. Very like a whale. *Hamlet.*

IN estimating the merits of a portrait, there is one condition more essential than the rest; it must be *like*. Truth of likeness is the first point of excellence. So in the affair of a simile, however employed, whether in an epic poem or in ordinary table-talk, there must be a likeness in the case; some positive point of resemblance between two objects, to warrant the introduction of the ominous word "like."

Portrait-painters, however, in defiance of the imperativeness of the condition specified, often give a preference to an imaginary past likeness over the present, and assume some features of resemblance which probably never existed. Again, in as many instances, they persist in looking forward to a period of similitude, anticipating a likeness to be hereafter recognised.

"Oh, sir," said the disappointed mother, when the artist had finished her child's portrait, "you have done it beautifully indeed, only it is not in the least like my little boy."

"My dear madam," said the far-seeing R. A., "he will *grow like it*, astonishingly like."

But the makers of similes, by pen and speech, often proceed upon a plan far more unrestricted than this, which seems nevertheless to have no limit, as it includes with the present the past and future. Their plan appears to be to look for the likeness not merely where it is not, but where it never was and never will be.

Poets, of course, are privileged people; and though not allowed to invent resemblances non-existent and impossible, have a licence to detect in things inward and remote a lurking and most unlikely similarity. Their similes may either imply a likeness immediate, exact, and undeniable, or an analogy existing only in feeling, in sympathy, in the dimness of association, in the impalpable depths of the obscure. Of the two kinds, the latter is the more poetical; and, strange to say, that in this respect swarms of plain prosy people are in their hourly household discourse poetical exceedingly.

Where can one turn for an hour's chat, east or west of the city; on what topic can we hold a ten minutes' gossip either with the busy or the idle, the rough or the refined, the matter-of-fact or the imaginative; and not find a passion for seeking resemblances, for pursuing similes under difficulties, breaking out at every second sentence of the conversation? Why, the habit of hunting up similitudes is universal. These are the likes that beget likes.

Some matter-of-fact man took the pains once, it is said, to count up the number of similes scattered by Moore over the "Life of Sheridan;" but did the cunning critic skilled in Cocker, though probably blessing his stars, as he read over his own naked prose, that he was no poet, ever tax his arithmetic so far as to count up the number of similes and no similes he himself might be heard to let drop, in the course of one day's

disjointed discursive talk upon the hundreds of common-places that are continually arising? Why, it is a faculty which the highest and the lowest have in common; and it would doubtless happen, if we were to leave out the consideration of excellence and beauty, and confine ourselves to numbers alone, that the very dullest of Mr. Moore's commentators would perpetrate in a day more similes than he would.

In what degree the organ of comparison is ordinarily developed on the heads we see about us, phrenology best knows; but if there be any external token, corresponding in dimensions with the excess and constancy of the habit, some of our acquaintances ought to find it impossible to get their hats on.

Not one in a hundred, of the ten thousand who having something to say for themselves, are pretty sure to say it if you give them the opportunity, but cultivates the practice; often unconsciously, it is true, but always finding in it some relief or convenience, as children do in the pictures that embellish their story-books. They are both helps and ornaments. Whatever the image in the speaker's mind, to think of something like it, not merely assists his description, and presents it more vividly, but it helps him to define it more clearly to himself, and to comprehend all its bearings more completely.

When he has found this out, the faculty gets more frequently into play, and similes come to him of their own accord. He finds one in a case of perplexity a wonderful interpreter of his unexpressed meanings. When his object is not clear, whether for want of clear thoughts or plain words, the simile is held up like a mirror, and displays the doubtful object with distinctness. It is like the good luck of happening to think "of a church of the same name," when you cannot

recollect how your new acquaintance is called, Nokes or Styles. The use of a simile is as convenient for clearing up, as the production of a miniature in the final act of a play, when a general consanguinity among the characters is the author's last card.

Where such effects are producible, no wonder that the habit becomes catching, and that every idea begets another, the instant it is born, to image and represent it; as the swan that floats double on St. Mary's Lake, is imaged by its shadow in the water. Thus people who, as some would inconsiderately suppose, are unblessed with one single idea, are in reality possessed of a pair; the one having no sooner taken its first peep into existence, than you find it is "like" something else, so dissimilar and remote, that it would never by any possible chance have entered into your imagination to conceive it. Actual likeness soon, of course, comes to be little thought of, and similes are naturally adopted quite at random.

But even an entire want of appropriateness is not found to destroy the efficacy of the simile; though it should at last turn out to be as complete a mystification as that native of Ireland of whom his countrymen said, that "he was like nothing in the world but himself, and not much of that."

There is a capital pair of similes in one of the Falstaff scenes; the first as illustrative of exactness and appropriateness, as the second is illustrative (in appearance) of that total inapplicability, and that innocence of all resemblance in the things compared, of which we have been speaking.

"The rogue," saith Sir John, panting at the mere idea of a running-match, "the rogue fled from me *like quicksilver*."

"I' faith," cries Doll, "and thou followedst him *like a church!*"

This last is wonderfully like the similes current in general company, and now in hourly use; but in reality it is a very counterpart of its companion for exactness and for truth. A running dodging fellow would naturally enough awaken in Falstaff's mind the idea of quicksilver; while of fat Jack's running after him, the young lady had the same idea as of the lively movements, the unassisted velocity, of a church. Doll could have done nothing whatever in the way of description of Falstaff's hopeless incapacity for following the fugitive, like producing the picture of immovability conveyed by that extraordinary simile.

The necessity of resorting to the simile in all such desperate cases is felt even from earliest boyhood. Even in schooldays, when events so fall out that it is difficult at the moment to call to mind anything like them, they yet must be likened to something or other; and accordingly we hear how "Thwaites has been punching Wiglins's head like any*thing!*" Like *what,* it were impossible to say; but anything is better than nothing, and the sentence could not be terminated without a comparison.

It is on this principle, found out so early in life, and in the consciousness of this want which accompanies us all through it, that certain phrases have been invented and dispersed through the world, as legitimate and recognised substitutes for this too general and indefinite simile, "like any*thing.*" It was felt in the process of time, to be more dignified to mention explicitly some one object of comparison, no matter for its absolute and notorious non-resemblance in the particular case; and hence by a happy social fiction, profound as some of the

fictions for which the law is famous, the ingenious expression, "like bricks," rose into popularity.

To hear of ministers putting on taxes like bricks, or of public meetings assembling like bricks; of Snaggs drinking pale ale like bricks, and of Braggs smoking mild Havannahs like bricks; of one talking like bricks, and another bolting like bricks; in short, of men universally reading, writing, toiling, and begging like bricks; paying their debts and cheating their creditors like bricks; soon became quite a matter of course. The admirable invention seemed to be universally applicable, because it nowhere applied; it was even said of persons who have a passion for erecting new tenements by the thousand, in every lime-besprinkled suburb of London, that they were building houses like bricks, the houses being in reality like lath.

A slight variation, equally avoiding the chances of applicability, was now suggested by a sense of universal convenience, and "like blazes," broke frequently on the gratified ear. The tide was said to be running up like blazes, or teetotalism getting on like blazes, or trade being opened like blazes. The appositeness of the simile was everywhere recognised; and, as in the case of bricks, it saved trouble in particularizing, and left all to the imagination.

Similar advantages were discoverable in the use of the term "winkin;" and looking like winkin, riding like winkin, and spending money like winkin, equally testified to the value set upon a stock phrase, by which a mysterious likeness to something not admitting of a definition was clearly implied.

How much better is it, since similes in conversation can no more be dispensed with than syllables, to have in this way a standard image, whatever it may be, bricks or winkin, set up as it were by proclamation and national

consent, to which all other images as soon as they arise in the mind must instinctively conform. Better, surely, than to be beating about for similitudes, stopping and stammering in the hurry of discourse to pick out an exact object of comparison; and after all, perhaps, succeeding only in suggesting, that the lady cried like the muffin-man, while her lover went and shot himself like a partridge. Better, again we say, than to be brought to a dead standstill, with a simile sticking in one's throat, "For all the world like—like—like—" and no, nothing in all the world can one think of like it, because one has all the world to seek a comparison in, "where to choose."

Everybody in turn, however apt at finding resemblances, and of however busy an imagination, has been on some interesting occasion in this predicament; the organ of comparison is tuned, but the bellows will not work.

"Why, ma'am, little Jessie, who is but eight months old, would no more mind it than, than—nothing at all."

"Don't ask me, pray don't ask me to play at cards; I could just as soon play whist as—just—as the—a—Thames."

"Strange kind of people, very strange, as you properly observe, my dear sir. I stayed with them six weeks; and yet I declare I know no more about any one of them, than—than—than I could fly!"

My old tutor, venerable Jacob Wright, was the first person singular that ever drew my attention to the common practice of simile-making. He was a master-hand at it; with him it was a grand art, and he would create a simile under the ribs of death. Well remembered to this day is the summer morning, when, having a holiday from breakfast-time, he came into school at seven to give us a single hour's attendance. Dressed

ready for departure, his ordinary brown-black was cast aside, and we were dazzled by the shining sable of his suit.

We proceeded with our lessons as usual, when a point for explanation arose, and Jacob, whose thoughts till then had evidently not wandered far from his new array and the approaching hours of pleasure and liberty, began to expound to us some novel passage.

"A passage," said he, in his gayest tones, "which has little of the peculiar character of this author, and which indeed has been said by some critics to be in the manner of Theocritus; though it is no more like Theocritus—" (here his glances wandered over the ceiling and floor, and then round the walls of the school, till it rested complacently on his own knees as he sat) "no more like Theocritus, than it is like *my black satin breeches!*"

Whereat there was a rush of many eyes, all in one direction; and all, with one admiring, devouring gaze, settled on the glossy novelties, which were of black satin indeed! Jacob, the simplest, wisest of old men, was a vain old idiot that sunny morning. Breeches would have ruined him if he could have got them often. Black satin would have turned him into a peacock.

But this was doubtless quite an involuntary turn. What good Jacob Wright was famous for, was his sheer inventions and sham-similes, thrown out to set one wondering and inquiring. Many a dull boy brightened his wits, by reflection and investigation, while looking for an analogy where none existed. But this sport he practised only on the older heads, and so grave was his manner that heads aged as his own might be taken in.

Harmless almost always, the jest generally tended to set us reading or meditating; but it admitted of a rather mischievous imitation sometimes, and L., one of the

most mischief-loving as well as humourous of our set, was often on the watch to catch victims by catching Jacob's style.

He would be heard speaking seriously enough concerning some object, of which, when he had drawn towards him the listeners he wanted, he would declare that it possessed the most contradictory properties; adding carelessly, as if the fact were indisputable—

"It is like an ebony ruler, which, though so hard a substance when applied to anything else, has, as is perfectly well known, no power to break glass."

Leaving this fact to fix itself in the wondering minds of youthful experimentalists, he would wait quietly until the morning, to count the boys who were to be flogged for breaking windows.

Among the conscientious, however, who are for formal exactness and literal truth in their similes, no plan can be so safe as that on which we observe people now and then acting, that of comparing a thing, not to something else, but to itself. Thus they will inform you, that a terrier in a rabid state, bit a soldier, and ran off like a mad dog; that the soldier flung after him a stone like a brick, swearing all the time like a trooper; that the surgeon applied his knife to the wound like a bit of cold steel; that the patient bore it like a Trojan; while a certain pretty lass leaned over him, the tears running out of her eyes like—water.

ANTIPACIFICATION.

When the quarrelsome principle is properly understood, there will never be any reserve. For an old grudge, or a tooth that plagues you after a twelvemonth's plugging, there is but one remedy; have it out. Reserve may be useful in many of the affairs of life; it is villanous in quarrels. It says less than it thinks, and thus insures you all the worry and fatigue of a battle without the enjoyment; the headache of the debauch without its riotous jollity. It is destructive of the earnestness, the sincerity of what the Irish call the "shindy." It is as if a Tipperary boy were to wrap up the knob of his shillelagh in lambswool before he applied it to the sconce of a respected relative or associate.

Reserve constitutes the chief difference between touchy people and the quarrelsome. An intimate acquaintance, who had called upon us three times a week since George III. died, chose to absent himself without explanation, about fifteen months ago, and we have only just heard the reason, the true cause of offence: we had happened to observe that we did not think Julius Cæsar quite honest; and we had hinted that he was rather bald. Now any dear friend of Cæsar's that will quarrel with you on such a point outright, may be a pleasant fellow enough, and far be it from us to baulk his propensity; but we detest reserve in such matters. We hate the feeling that interprets a remark upon Zoroaster or Confucius as a personal affront, and yet shrinks from telling you so, except by cold looks or a twelvemonth's absence.

But the truly quarrelsome we like; those by whom

the art is more perfectly understood, and more openly practised; and they are sure to like you in return if you will go to war with them. The straight line to pursue is a direct contradiction. You must let them have their way by refusing to let them have it. Accommodate them with a check; yield to them a point-blank opposition; and they are your own for ever. The best friends in the world are those who are every now and then the inveterate enemies of each other.

The intercourse between persons of this happy temperament is all life and animation; the rapid succession of pebbles dropped into the stagnant pool, with now and then a stone of some size to make a splash with, sets all sparkling, and originates circles ever widening and ever new. The truest taste of friendship is just before and just after a desperate and apparently irreconcilable quarrel. Lovers in all ages have experienced the same thing. Man and wife, judging by their practice, admit the fact. Sects and parties proclaim it aloud in all they say and do. Nations, from the beginning, have stamped it for a truth.

Byron wondered how the first couple "got through the twenty-four hours;" and wonderful it would be if we supposed they never quarrelled. Having that privilege, they had the necessary and unfailing escape from *ennui*. People, when fiercely wrangling, and ferociously abusing one another, have no sense of the *tedium vitæ*. That is a disease bred only in peace and quietness.

> "And spring would be but gloomy weather,
> If we had nothing else but spring."

The thunderstorm does "clear the air," that's certain.

There are two classes of people with whom the quarrelsome are ever ready to contend; the people they do know, and the people they do not know. Those they

know deservedly have the preference. Where the esteem is very strong, the attachment old and closely knit, this preference, of course, is still more strongly marked. They are never at a loss to gratify their desires; they can always find a ground of quarrel if they sincerely respect you.

Perhaps you don't write a line for two days, in return for a letter which requires no answer at all. This is quite enough. Their resentment is profound, their astonishment overwhelming. They cannot for their lives conceive what they have ever done to merit such treatment. They turn over the history of their friendship with you, page by page; no, not a word of the long record reproaches *them*. They have always, &c., but henceforth they never will, &c. They must write *finis* to the history at once; for such contemptuous neglect, such indifference turned up with scorn, is not to be borne.

Or perhaps you answer a note of no consequence the instant you receive it. The promptitude is peculiarly offensive. Something is the matter, that is quite evident. The alacrity to reply clearly expresses what the note itself does *not* say. You are standing upon the nicest ceremonies with them; what was once friendship has frozen into civility; they can distinctly perceive that. Had they been total strangers they should have expected exactly such courtesy; and from "Dear Harry" they instantly drop down to "My dear sir," writing by the same post to a mutual friend to say they were always a little afraid that you had no heart.

These are but two, out of two thousand equally certain modes of doing your duty by a quarrelsome friend, and obliging him with a grievance in the time of need. Perhaps you have forgotten to return the novel you borrowed of him (this is extremely probable); he can

then freely indulge his fit, either of sulky regret that you should so alienate the goodwill of men by your irregularities and selfishness, or of ungovernable anger at your choosing *him* for your victim, and his books for your prey. If you have but one pamphlet of his, and he wishes to quarrel, he counts up the gaps in his library, and at once attributes them all to you. But if by some accident you return the novel when it is wanted no longer, equally certain is the provocation. You have packed up his book, and sent it to him *"with thanks!"* He lent it frankly, cordially, with all his heart, and you return it to him the *very next week!* Did he ask for it? Did he enter the loan in his note-book? Did you suppose that he was caring more about a trashy fiction than the accommodation of a friend! What could be your meaning! He was the last person whom you should have insulted with that display of cold and punctilious exactness. But he now knows your opinion of him, and can understand your character. He sends you "his compliments" with the next communication.

The quarrelsome always derive one advantage from a long and intimate knowledge of the parties with whom they quarrel. They can cite the particular word or deed, the omission or commission of which they complain, as a specimen of what they have for years borne in unreproaching silence. Give them but the shadow of a pretence for considering themselves slighted, once and but once, and then imagination will immediately help them to a long succession of slights which they have unmurmuringly endured. The immediate offence is but the last link of a chain. It turns out that this is the way they have always been served. They should not mind one unkindness, they can overlook more symptoms of indifference than most people, but to submit to a series of cold-hearted and intentional neglects

demands meekness superhuman; and they must own that even their patience gets tired of sitting on a monument, and smiling night and day, without encouragement and without a witness. Their patience in fact jumps down, and starts off to Donnybrook fair.

The quarrel with strangers includes no such advantage. One cannot very well, even in the full swing of passion, accuse a man whom we have never encountered before, of having insulted us on a hundred occasions. Yet this is desirable, if not necessary. The universal history of rows tells us plainly enough that a simple grievance is never held to be a sufficient ground of battle. It never could content the truly quarrelsome ambition. There must be a compound offence; real or imaginary, it matters not. The principle on which all well-regulated quarrels are conducted, is to "rake up" wrongs, to heap injury upon injury, to pile Pelions upon Ossas. Materials for this are only to be supplied by a prolonged intimacy, if confidential, the better. The mere stranger, therefore, is but a wretched substitute for a valued friend. With the one we must pick our quarrels, with the other we may take them as they come, and still find them "very pretty" contentions. Nevertheless, a shindy with a mere stranger will serve its purpose when a friend is not to be had. To exercise our pugnacity on those for whom we care not a straw, is better than to let our hours waste away in a perpetual dead calm on the Pacific.

As there are two classes wherein the quarrelsome can always find antagonists, so there are two modes of bringing about the desired affray. The one is, to go to the scene which you intend to be the field of battle with a preconceived provocation, a challenge to one particular combatant; the other is, to prepare no plan of assault,

but to rely on the general tone of friendly conversation for the productiveness of animosity.

The first, though seldom liable to total failure, is usually the least successful of the two. We have known experienced and skilful quarrellers fail for hours in finding a bone to pick, even at the table where the best of friends were assembled. It is dangerous at times to make a plant, though your own brother be the object; if you happen to miss your first spring, all the company turn pacificators before the peace is broken at all. If the plan of attack must be premeditated, let it be general; throw out a hint that Nelson was a poor creature, and add, that you never thought Wellington such a very great captain. You will then run very little risk of preserving the peace. Or if alone with an acquaintance, and you fear that the evening might, in spite of his perverseness and irritability, pass away in amity and dulness, begin at once by savagely attacking somebody with whom you know he has quarrelled. He will be pretty sure to start up in defence of the man to whom he bears a grudge, for the sake of a mortal conflict with the man to whom he is attached.

There is an order of men with whom you have but to sympathise, to provoke them to turn upon you. Tell them that they are ill-used, and they will ill-use you. They cannot bear to hear from another's lips the fact they loudly proclaim with their own. If you prostrate yourself in pure devotion to them, they will put their feet upon you where you have thrown yourself.

The better mode is, to leave it all to chance. The chapter of accidents is sure to furnish some text for quarrel. When friends assemble to have "a pleasant night of it," the open, candid, cordial "row," is generally but tacitly anticipated as an essential part of

the social entertainment. We confess our enjoyment of it, when we designate it, as the popular phrase emphatically does, "a *jolly* row." The less you know about its origin the better. The more clearly you understand the circumstances of its rise and progress, the more surely is it brought to an end.

Cassio's quarrel is the thing, he remembers *that*, "but nothing wherefore." When you begin to comprehend what it is all about, you cease to relish it. The glorious riot then assumes the sober character of reason. A convulsion deliberately got up is well enough in its way; but the unprompted, unpremeditated tumult is better; like parties of pleasure, that are never planned three weeks before date, but start into instantaneous life.

Of the two adversaries, then, the stranger and the friend, which the quarreller will naturally seek, the last is to be preferred; of the two modes of eliciting a contest, that which is least premeditated, and most left to the happy chances of convivial and confidential intercourse, is by much the best. Let him but adhere to these two rules, and the quarreller has the field to himself. He is free from all imputation of malignity in his attack, for he has the sincerest regard for his enemy; he is cleared from every suspicion of slyness and deceit, for his quarrel sprang out of the occasion, and was open as day. He may in this manner pass through life in secure and continual enjoyment of the luxury of embroilment, preserving, with the respect of all men, the very particular esteem of the persons he is at war with. It is only the

"*Whispering* tongues that poison truth;"

and give hearts once united the likeness of

"Cliffs that have been rent asunder."

Whispered complaints are detestable. It is the open rupture, the bold outspoken abuse of you and yours, the manly honesty that runs you down at Charing-cross in the broad noon-day, that constitutes the excellence of the quarrelsome friend. So far from desiring concealment, he begs that you may be informed of it. He goes from Brown to Brown, and from Jones to Jones with the same story.

"I never make a secret of my opinion about him" (no, he gives it unasked). "I always tell him his faults to his face; we are fast friends, and I want all the world to know the fooleries he commits. If it were not for his pride, avarice, and conceit, his habits of toadyism and ridiculous jealousy, together with that unfortunate disregard to truth which I always reminded him of, and that provoking proneness to treachery which everybody must have noticed, he would be the best creature in the world.

"If one could but believe a word he says, no man's conversation would be pleasanter; and if he would but get rid of that selfishness which taints all he does, no man would be capable of better actions. Tell him what I say; he is my old friend, and as you observe, an excellent fellow on the whole; here 's his health!"

You trace every ill report against you to this old and excellent friend; but can you help loving, and quarrelling with him?

SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF HEARTS.

It is a remarkable fact that up to the auspicious moment in which the establishment of this new society, of whose existence and proceedings we have a special report, was conceived for the happiness of man, no

institution having a similar object and tendency had ever been projected. Societies were anything but scarce. Human nature has shown an inclination, in all times and countries, to combine and associate for its own pleasure and profit; but for the purpose indicated by the title of this admirable association, the idea of gathering together never awoke in the brain.

Societies for every purpose beside, good and evil, in the earth, or in the waters under the earth. Societies to make us swimmers and skaters, to create painters and sculptors, to foster art and science in every shape, to dig up antiquarians and screw out engineers, to make laws and compel their repeal, to set us singing and dancing, shooting, riding, and driving; societies to drill us into everything attainable; to teach us something of all that is useless, and a little of much that is useful; to make us accomplished, knowing, learned; to give us grace and bodily strength, to use perfections and to conceal defects; to do ten thousand opposite things, many of them possible, and a few desirable.

Yes: people have never been slow to evince their cleverness, such as it is. Not a child of their begetting but would rather, when patted on the head, be called clever than good; and the same weakness is not always worked out of the flesh in old age. And so we have societies of every class and degree, devised from time to time by wonderfully clever fellows, to make mankind intellectual and happy: associations for improving the head, for enchanting the ears, for fascinating the eyes, for feasting every sense, for directing the voice, for educating the hands, for exercising all the limbs, for advancing the feet in the general march: but one society, efficacious and full of blessings above all others, was still wanting until now; it was the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts.

How it originated is of little consequence. Be sure of this, that its origin was small enough; what good work ever had any other! There is no crevice so narrow, that good will not ooze through it, and gather and augment slowly, until it can force its way by degrees, and flow in a full broad stream. Once set good going, and who can say where it will stop!

Perhaps the grand originating idea of this Society first awoke in a brain of not superior dimensions or quality, ordinarily, to that of a moth when it is flying into the flame. Perhaps the benevolence, the humanising spirit of the project, first heaved and throbbed in a heart no bigger than a mite's, and having commonly no sympathies, no aspirations towards anything higher than cheese. Some men's hearts are of this pattern; very possibly; but do not therefore give them and their affections up. No; cherish a hope of those hearts still; nay, generously prophecy their enlargement, and they will expand, and glow, and become animate under the very influence of that prediction. The affectionate confidence of it acts upon them like destiny.

The Society for the Encouragement of Hearts, however it sprung up, was born to flourish and prosper for ever. It has many distinguishing features; but the chief one is that it has no bound or limit, and the only rule provided for its government seems to be, that there shall be no rules at all. Anybody may become a member in whatever state or stage of the heart. The door is open to all in all conditions. There are no black-balls, except the pieces of ebony which numbers of people bring with them in their bosoms. Hearts of even that hue and substance are not unwelcomed, and nothing is too bad for admission into the Encouragement Society.

What is the result! In ten hundred instances out

of a thousand, a rapid, beautiful, and all but marvellous change. No sooner is the candidate for admission an acknowledged fellow of the Society, registered and enrolled, than an alteration ensues. A certain lightness pervades all the region of the heart; the inward ebony blushes for its own blackness, and softens instantaneously. Sometimes, this takes place of its own accord, sometimes it happens unconsciously. But the transformation is not the less certain. The dry withered root puts forth a sweet and innocent blossom; the hard cold cinder emits a brilliant flame, clear and of heaven-ward course as when life began.

It may be asked, how can a change so sudden and complete be effected, by the simple act of enrolment as a fellow of the Society of Hearts, without any gradual operation of its principles, or affording needful time for the development of its proper influences. The answer is easily supplied by another question; how is it that a man becomes an antiquarian the instant he is admitted a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries? How does it happen that we become learned on being called to the bar, and honourable the moment we get, by disgraceful means, into Parliament?

Enough for the fame and honour of the Society if we state facts, without attempting to account for them. It is a case in which clouds of witnesses can be called. Old Lord Cheeseparing would serve to prove something; he who starved for forty years, till having joined the society under the impression that he should have his board for nothing, he went out immediately to bespeak many quarts of turtle-soup, gave a sumptuous banquet to a score or two of astonished friends, and has kept open house at Mouldy-hall ever since. A society, or a system, call it what we will, that could move Lord Cheeseparing to give a dinner, not to speak

of the continual practice of hospitality, never need despair of success.

Greater wonders, however, were worked when Luke Quinton became a member. Luke was a man with only one fault; but it was the monster-vice, envy. His whole heart was sound save in a single place; it was where the deadly plague-spot of envy lingered year by year incurably. The horrid sore was the more burning and sickening, because he was incessantly conscious of its nature. His hateful malady was his hourly familiar, like his shadow; but then like his shadow he could not drive it away, never separate himself from it. He knew the name as well as he knew the aspect of his eternal fiend, who was present with him even in sleep; but he could no more banish the reality that tormented him than he could banish from his sleep the spectres that reproached him. A thousand times he felt the dead gnawing sensation at his heart's core; and a thousand times he said, "This is envy, let me root it out, ere it eats away the very life of life!" but it came again, unthought of and on the sudden, fastened on the faint sick heart, and fascinated while it stung.

This inveterate and ever-returning envy had but one object. In the wide world there was but a single being who excited the odious feeling in the otherwise innocent breast of Luke: and this one being was his old playmate, his early-chosen and most constant friend. Fire could not have burnt out of him the passion of friendship that had grown up and entwined itself with his life; but on the other hand to have poured out all of his blood that was daily and almost hourly tainted with the meanest envy, would have been to empty his veins.

Struggle with the strong vice, and guard himself as he best might against its dark and insidious approaches, he assuredly did, but he did so unavailingly. He

reasoned with his own nature in the silent, meditative, self-examining night; and roused himself into the best of humours and the happiest reliance upon his recovered soundness and security in the warm, cheerful day, when he laughed openly with his companions, and felt no secret shame within; happy, because he believed that his heart might be laid bare to all the world, and no trace of envy be detected lurking amid its most hidden sensations. But then suddenly, while esteeming himself saved and purified from so corrupting and humiliating a sin; while enjoying accordingly all the emotions of his better nature, and especially while partaking the sweets of a friendship that constituted the master-sentiment of his existence; the former pang would return, and an instantaneous convulsion of the bosom would show the old evil to be yet alive in him.

How reconcile such contradictions, or release him from such a tormentor! His friend's good fortune, which should have filled him with joy, often made his heart ache. He would himself have died to have been the author of it; yet he felt a sickness like death when he saw that friend, profiting by a rich windfall, and revelling in some unexpected happiness. If the same lot had fallen to another he had been content and pleased. It delighted him to see people prosper. To witness the enjoyment of good luck, was in his case to share it. And this too, at all times, and with all persons but the one. When this good luck fell to his friend, the bright sunny flash brought to Luke only a chill and a shadow. He could almost have dashed the golden prize from the deserver's hands, or have intercepted it on its way; and gladly would he have seen it in preference enjoyed by some unhonoured, unbeloved possessor.

In the midst of mirth and gaiety the black feeling

stole over him, shot through him rather; and he seemed as unable to protect himself from it as from the lightning of heaven. He began to think that he was defenceless, incurably subject to the constant and dreadful visitations of a disease that, do what he might to expel or to hide it, discovered itself, coldly or fiercely, in his eyes, while his cheeks at the same time blushed at its presence. A breath would sometimes suffice to bring the blighting air upon him; a careless allusion to his friend, a word dropped in his honour. Eulogy and admiration, expressed in his hearing, though spoken of the man whom he had no words to praise sufficiently, wrought in him an impulse of disparagement, and moved him (strange as it may sound) to depreciate what he idolised. The expression of such regard and affection as he himself felt, instead of being echoed by every wakened sympathy within him, by answering music from every chord of his nature, provoked displeasure and dissent, and feelings that only rankled the more if constrained to be silent. Envy at such moments took possession of him, and scarcely left him the semblance of self-control.

The malady hung about him for ten years, poisoning the spring at which he most loved to drink, embittering his best enjoyment. He tried all this time every remedy but the right one. *That* he found only in the Association for the Encouragement of Hearts. When the Society was founded, the patient, instead of shrinking into solitude, communing with his own weakness, and making vows which he had lost even the hope of being able to keep, immediately joined its ranks; and he began to improve that very moment. In three days, he heard his friend praised, and that highly, without experiencing a pang. In a week the most rapturous eulogy bestowed in the same quarter, awoke in him no

uneasy feeling whatever. A day or two after, he began even to find pleasure in listening; which rose next morning to joy of the most novel kind; and he now swelled the strain with all the power of his lungs, his spirit was so light. He was like a fond, passionate lover, just released from the rack of jealousy. The cruel and remorseless enemy dropped from his heart. Envy was dead, and Luke Quinton lived, for the first time in his life. The Society will now "warrant him heart-whole."

There was the case of the Hon. Simon Wrinkle; it only happened last week; the catastrophe, that is to say; for the case itself commenced years ago, when that superior town-made gentleman fell in love with the sweet suburban beauty, Kitty Auburn. People laughed a little at the time, but Simon was serious; and Kitty, for her part, was very serious, though she prettily pretended to laugh. It was palpably a case of true love, if ever there was one; but there is not the slightest ground for declaring that its course did not run smooth, the sole complaint being in this peculiar instance, that it did not run at all. True love stood still, and uttered not a word. That was its only fault. Kitty Auburn was manifestly all ear; Mr. Simon Wrinkle had evidently no tongue.

Night after night, moonlight, starlight, or no light, there hung the fair Capulet upon the accustomed balcony, eager to be wooed and willing to be won; but the enamoured Montague never effectually cleared the garden-wall, but stuck fast on the spikes at the top. Such was their sad situation for years; the lady audibly avowing a passion of which the Hon. Mr. Wrinkle would have given his ears to hear a single whisper: and the gentleman dying visibly of a sentimental

lockjaw, finding it impossible to get his mouth open whenever his adored was approachable.

With every hope of being beloved, he had every fear of betraying his own affection. "If she should find it out," he would say to himself, "what would she think of me?"

"If he would but speak," murmured Kitty, every night as she went to sleep: "and speaking is so easy when it is but to tell what one knows already!" A comfortable reflection, and yet it was very provoking.

But Simon Wrinkle could do anything in the world but that. No lover on earth so attentive, though as a lover he had no nominal or authorised existence. No passion so many-tongued and expressive as his, though he had never breathed a syllable that could be said to disclose it. By a thousand nameless tokens, and by sympathies that required no aid from speech, he had poured out all the secrets of his soul; but he was tongue-tied nevertheless.

"Why don't he speak!" still murmured Kitty, every night, tired of the pretty pantomime of love that spoke so plainly in another language.

He would have spoken out fast enough, and not have allowed those precious months and years to roll over in silence; two kind hearts beating in union on the brink of bliss, and yet trembling in uncertainty; had Kitty Auburn been a duchess. Not then would he have lingered at the gate of his paradise; that gate being left ajar, and he with one foot inside. No, he would have risked everything, and shrunk from no degree of presumption. He would have boldly told an empress that he adored her, and have said, in plain English, "There's my hand, will you have me?" But Kitty Auburn was not an empress; she was no duchess; any more than a

simple field-flower is a diamond; yet, though the duchess would have had no power to dazzle Simon, Kitty had; and Mr. Wrinkle wished his father had been an ironmonger or a potato-merchant, that he might have been relieved from the humiliation of being supposed to be conscious of any distinction between them, or any advantages unshared by herself.

"I only ask her to be Mrs. Wrinkle," he reasoned; "but if she should for a moment suppose that I presume to seek her hand, conceiving she might be influenced by a thought of a coronet to come, the bare suspicion of the possibility deprives me of utterance. No, I don't think I can ask the delightful, the awful question this morning. But when I again come to town—"

However, the Hon. Simon Wrinkle, whether in town or country, was so happy in his wooing, that he could never rouse himself to make the first motion necessary to marriage. "He never was, but always to be" bold. He was for ever on the eve of crying, "*Do* you, and *will* you?" Like the learned ignoramus who had been talking Greek all his life without knowing it, Simon had been making love for years, with the desperate determination of just going to begin. When people wondered why the frank-hearted Kitty did not accept his hand, they could not guess that it had never been offered. When they admired his devotion, and told her how very, very fond he was of her, she could only turn away with a little laugh, which was far more sad than merry, whispering to herself, "I wish to Heaven he would say so, that he had said so years ago."

Was this a case for hope? There seemed none. Simon, it was clear, would go to his grave all wrinkles, ere his lips would voluntarily unseal; and poor Kitty Auburn's locks would be snow-white, and her sunny cheerful youth be all overclouded and withered into

wintriness, long before the passion of her pure heart, so warmly and truly answered, had a chance of being more nearly neighboured or more dearly rewarded.

There was no hope: none, until the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts opened its doors the other day to the Hon. Simon Wrinkle. A gentleman so much in need of its beneficent influences, was, of course, instantaneously admitted to the full enjoyment of all the privileges of a fellow; with what effect upon his temperament was soon seen in the new light wherein his character appeared. *He*, timid and procrastinating! a trifler with another's happiness and his own, for want of a little self-confidence and decision! The last man in the Society for that, was Simon the bold; for he had only been installed a fellow about eight-and-forty hours, when off he started in the direction of a snug little suburban retreat, and in hot pursuit of its drooping, half-despairing mistress.

There, cured as by a magic charm of his distrust, reserve, and bashful irresolution, he raised the startled but still expectant Kitty out of that wasting sickness of suspense to which she was sensibly falling a prey, and with incomparable tenderness breathed all the impassioned eloquence of his love in six of the most prosaic little words in the language. To which Kitty could only reply, waiving the poetry of gleaming eyes, and cheeks rich with roses, brighter than the sunset, in words just as honest and prosaic, that, of course, she *did*, and, of course, she *would*; but why had he not asked her before?

Well, there was no more delay; for Kitty was the wife of Simon Wrinkle before he had completed one month of his fellowship in the successful Society for the Encouragement of Hearts.

To write the history of an institution so philanthropic

is but to relate miracles over and over again, and multiply examples like that of Diggins, the man of all work, everybody's agent, and nobody's friend. Let us add his true testimony to the rest.

Diggins had grown old in the service of the worst part of the world, without ever seeming to know whether it was bad or good. He was, in some degree, like those glass-faced clocks with invisible works: people long supposed that Diggins had no feelings; that he went without works. It was not that he was believed to carry some spongy substance in his breast, in place of that naturally throbbing and beating machine which nature appointed for the convenience, and, though the stony rogues are not aware of it, for the comfort of her children: no, the popular conviction was, that his bosom was a vacancy, an original hollow; that nature in this special instance did *not* "abhor a vacuum;" but that the rather Irish idea of Pope,

> The craving void left aching in the breast,

was realised beneath the waistcoat of Diggins. Nobody attributed bad feelings to him: they only denied that he ever had any. Nobody called him hard-hearted; they merely made oath that he never had a heart at all. Diggins might as well have been turned inside out; he was an empty vessel of mortality; an unfurnished tenement of clay. He was known as the man who had "nothing in him."

This at least is sure: he had no parent living, and child he never had, son or daughter. He had no wife, no sister. Diggins had no brother. He had neither uncle nor cousin. He had no relation of either sex, or of any kind or degree. Diggins never had a friend in the world, and, of course, was without a friend now. He had no crony who had once been his schoolfellow;

no crabbed partner in business; no idle cup-companion. Diggins had not a single acquaintance; he had no neighbour. He had employers, and he had dupes, no doubt; but the second, perhaps, were merged in the first. He had fellow-countrymen, it is true; but it is hardly true that Diggins had fellow-creatures.

Diggins as he *was*, we mean! It is at all events certain, that if he really possessed in former times anything in the nature of a heart, he had never by any chance treated it to a kind action. He had never permitted a little fresh blood to flow through it; but kept it stopped up, stifled and choked; never suffering it to knock at his ribs, or jump up into his mouth, or take any invigorating exercise whatever. He never permitted it any such liberty, and it must have dried up to a chip, and perished of starvation and imprisonment, if, indeed, it ever had an existence, save in wild imagination.

Only note the difference. When Diggins, the man who had nothing in him, was elected into the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts; though some inquired what business *he* had there, who could only, when he returned thanks for his admission, place his hand upon his stomach, and declare that it was too full for utterance; others might very speedily perceive in him the certain action of a principle, an instinct developed and put in motion by the vivifying atmosphere of the Association.

The childless Diggins, relationless, friendless, a stranger in the vast swarming world, seemed in a little time to belong to the social scene, to be a natural atom of it, and to know other atoms when he met them. This made him look more like them, and much less like himself, for his step was brisker, his brow smoother, his eye less dim, his very hair less gray. Then came a

flutter and a leap within, which actually made him feel like them. In a few hours he conceived an intense desire to do a good thing, somewhere, for anybody; all at once, that very minute. His soul would be shut up no longer, but got out for a holiday, and drew him dancing after it; and Diggins, to whom good and bad had been perfectly indifferent, save in their effects upon his own interests and objects, could in an instant judge between them, never to confound them again. But what most astonished him,—and it was, indeed, wonderfully curious,—was, that he who had no kith or kin on the grassy side of the churchyard, should now find in every part of the town such long streets full of his relations! "I must fish out an explanation of this phenomenon," said he, rather bewildered, "in the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts!"

Jaundice, who was for years so jealous of his lively and innocent wife, that it was at last thought by many that his melancholy was as green as it was yellow, was a long time before he could be persuaded to join the Society. He, a slave to the most wretched suspicion, was, in fact, afraid to stir out of doors, or out of view of his lady's window, which he watched from the attic at the corner of the street, to see if Mrs. Jaundice's great-grandfather had the profligacy to call and see her, while her own Jaundice was from home. Pillows, poison, and poniards, were alike unavailing, in such a complaint as this afflicted and frantic husband's; but one of these futile remedies, and possibly all three, he would infallibly have tried, either upon himself or his wife, but for the subtle and merciful influences of the Society of Hearts.

Entering that association, and being declared a fellow, his visage, as it revealed itself to its owner by a reflection in the large glass opposite, seemed surprisingly

less yellow than usual. He certainly then turned pale, which further lessened the ordinary hue; but in a few minutes another change came, and he was crimson from brow to beard. His inward nature, he knew not how, altered as remarkably; his sensations and sentiments were no longer the same, but like those he felt and cherished on the day he married Constance.

Constance, in short, became again an angel in his eyes, not more lovely than incorruptible. Ages of absence and temptation would fail to dim her lustre or weaken her affection; and when he hurried home, an hour before dinner, and found her fervent in argument with his friend, the young barrister, insisting prettily that he should stay and dine, and go with them to the Opera, for Jaundice would admire and like it of all things,—Jaundice, as soon as he recovered his breath, vowed that he *should,* of all imaginable things but *one!* which was nothing less than the gay, open, daring kiss, which, without one moment's warning, and to the utter amazement of the legal witness thereto, he forthwith imprinted on the lips of his charming wife, before she could get her little shriek out!

"I have just come," exclaimed Jaundice, with an affectedly off-hand air, giving the rosy Constance time to recover herself, "just come from the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts. Excellent institution that! But by Jove we'll go to the Opera. Constance, you must wear—wear—but you're a divinity in anything!"

When two friends quarrelled (the reader knows their names, or can readily supply them from his own list), how little was requisite to re-unite what never should have been separated; yet through what gloomy days and months did that estrangement endure! A word of recall would suffice, but how was it to be spoken, and how was its sufficiency to be mutually understood!

Each felt the pain, and the desire to end it, for the other's sake more than his own; but neither was in a situation to break ground, or make the first effort to draw near—

> To meet again like parted streams,
> And mingle as of old.

But when, after all this anguish, misapprehension, and rending asunder, they met one summer morning by chance; it was on the steps of the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts; one was going in, the other coming out; no pause or punctilio, rather say no explanation, was at all necessary. Hands outstretched were locked together, so were arms on the instant, and the friends never took different roads afterwards.

And what a beautiful instance of the efficacy of this society in dignifying and emboldening the heart, was supplied in the example of Jack Spanker. Poor little Jack was once quite bowed to the dust, because his friends wouldn't come down with it. What hurt him most was a tender and honourable sense of the fifty pounds he had borrowed and could not pay back, as he had promised. It was a farce, a mere feather; yet was it a world's weight on the sensitive feelings of poor Jack Spanker. No item in his list of debts, which was not particularly short, tortured him with such recollections. Persons, mixing in the merry world, laughed mightily if he but hinted at this the sharpest point of his griefs; but it pricked him to the soul nevertheless, and his eyes dropped melting pearls into his else vacant purse. He would have gladly owed more, much more, in another quarter; but not to pay this debt added venom to the bite of poverty.

Weary of the whole world, and most sick of himself, Jack had just embraced despair as his last companion in this life, when he saw himself put up as a candidate for

admission into the society, and verily became a fellow of the association for the Encouragement of Hearts. Presto Jack! A remedy was within reach on the instant. He flung despair to the winds, crying aloud with the pathetic desperation of the poet,

> And if the winds reject you, try the waves!

He resolved to relieve himself from his most painful obligation, that very hour. He was dashing Jack Spanker again. So, ordering a cab to the door of the Society for the Encouragement of Hearts, he drove off to his creditor, who had never once applied for the money, and boldly asked for the loan of a hundred pounds, as he could never enjoy peace of mind until he had paid the fifty!

Dexterously indeed does this society apply the spur of hope to prostrate despondency! There is in faith no limits to the encouragement which the sinking, jaded, self-mistrusting heart receives through the medium of this ingenious association. It is calculated, as we have partly shown, to do more service to the cause of morality than any incorporated society has hitherto rendered to other national objects, whether to learning, science, or the arts. To become an F.S.H., a Fellow of the Society of Hearts, will, at a rapidly approaching period, be deemed an object of high distinction, contrasted as it will be with some other attainments of fellowship, now in request, by the eminent usefulness of the honour.

"TALK OF THE DEVIL ——!"

It hath not appeared.
SIGNOR RODERIGO.

THIS notorious maxim, the half whereof is as expressive and intelligible as the whole, has, time out of mind, taken upon itself to assert that its hero will appear whenever he is talked about; in other words, that if men will rashly admit him into their mouths he will infallibly start up before their eyes. In the drama of life, the stage direction "Enter the Devil," is sure to be followed by an exclamation from all the characters, "Your worship was the last man in our mouths."

Nothing is more false; not the hero of the maxim himself. Nay more, nothing is more contrary to the fact, as it is made familiar to every one of us, by daily repetition, in ordinary life. Thus, it is not only false, but we know it to be so. To say that the Unmentionable appears when he is mentioned, is to figure as the pet son of that Father of Lies. And yet we go on, not merely handing down the falsehood as a fact, but applying its philosophy to all conceivable occurrences as fast as they arise.

We are talking of Jim, and Jim knocks at the door. We were just thinking of his grandmother, and she goes by at that moment in an omnibus. We are speaking of thunder, and a clap shakes the house! Talk of the devil!

Jack comes up to us in Piccadilly, just as we are celebrating his rare merits; talk of the devil! but we have puffed him thereabouts to the very clouds, scores of times, when Jack has been at Mile-end or Morocco.

Tom bolts into the room at the very instant we were abusing him; talk of the devil! but we have torn his character to ribands behind his back, and left him without a rag of respectability on a hundred occasions, when Tom's hand was never near the handle of the door. Enough that it happens once. The man is "always tying that shoe."

Common existence is necessarily full of coincidences, and common flesh and blood is necessarily full of wonderment; but if things and people would come when they were talked about, the world would burst at once into an extraordinary fit of gabble, and some of us might possibly begin to speak on rather forbidden subjects. Which virtuous man would begin to chatter about his neighbour's wife, or which of the incorruptibles would take to discoursing upon bribes, it would be invidious to guess.

But do we not, as it is, talk sufficiently of the desirables without getting them? and do we not also love to talk abundantly of the miserables? but here we have better luck, and very frequently secure them by so doing.

Talk of the devil and he will appear, whether he is talked of or not, if it suits him. A maiden lady of our acquaintance was always talking of young aristocrats, captains in the guards, and handsome commoners with large estates; this for a dozen years; but they never appeared; never once in all that time. And now she is talking night and day of small red lamp'd surgeons, in a state of celibacy, or single banking-clerks with a genteel turn and a rising salary; but although her teeth are wearing out with talking of them, even these do not appear. Perhaps there are a good many night patients, or no holidays at the bank now; at all events nothing happens *à propos*.

And as for McGammon, who is always talking of

honesty, let us ask of any reader who knows his habits whether he can be proved to have spoken twice on any other subject since he returned from transportation. Honesty is always in his mouth; he fastens his teeth in it, and his tongue takes kindly to no word but that. But did honesty ever appear in his conduct! If you observe, and it is rather curious, the figures are all wore off his satin waistcoat on the left-side, the result of a constant application of the hand to the heart, when he quotes his one line of poetry, "An honest man's the noblest work of God;" but, without the least disrespect to a few other persons whom we hear of, he is the greatest rogue in London.

Talk of the devil! Talk of truth, and see if that will make its appearance. But no such examples as the above will convince the true believer that the thing spoken of will not be a thing witnessed, now, or by and bye; that the person talked of will not appear, if you wait long enough. Old Mrs. Christian Smith believes devoutly. It is a point of her religion to rest implicit faith, and to be blind to all failures.

"This lamp-glass is an old servant," says one of the household, "I have often wondered it never got broken!"

"Ah!" sighs Mrs. Christian Smith, "I wish you had never mentioned it; it 's all over; that glass is doomed."

"What a while," cries that giddy Tabitha (to be sure she is young, being barely turned forty), "what a long, long while we have had these tea-cups. I can remember them for thirty years."

"My child," weeps the devout believer, "mark what I say: those cups will go!"

It has sometimes occurred to us that the reason why widows are not inclined to talk much about their deceased husbands, but are rather determined, Spartan fashion, never to say a syllable about them, is the fear

lest they should come back. Widows have a profound faith in the practical philosophy of "Talk of the devil!" "An excellent creature, my dear madam; but consider my feelings, and say nothing about him."

Of our male acquaintances, by much the most superstitious in this regard, is Shivers. He has an entire and conclusive faith in the universality of the devil's appearance when duly mentioned. If you talk to him of the hero of Waterloo, he looks as if almost ready to ring the bell, and order the door to be opened for the Duke of Wellington. Nay, to talk is not always necessary; to think is enough.

"How unlucky," he says, "that I should happen to have thought this morning of that wine-bill, run up before I was married, after forgetting it for five years. The man will certainly send the account in to-morrow, or perhaps call himself with it to-night. Having driven it from one's mind, to pay would be provoking."

"What of the railway shares they were going to rob you of?"

"Stop!" cries Shivers, "not a syllable more about *them*. I have heard nothing of their rascally proceedings for these six months; but now you have mentioned the matter, Grasper will be pretty sure to be upon me before the week's out. You can't help it; the mischief's done."

"Seen the Gibbses?"

"Those greedy, gloomy people! No, they have let us alone of late; but now you talk of them, they'll be here. Mrs. Shivers, my dear, pray recollect that we are out to the Gibbses. They are to call about Thursday or Friday." When he hears, not on Friday, but three months afterwards, that they have all knocked at his door, he says he knew how it would be, he was sure of it; "didn't I tell you so?"

Ask after a more joyous acquaintance, and the face of Shivers bursts out of a shadow, and a coming event casts its sunshine before. "Ha, to be sure; yes, jolly Bacchus, as we call him, I'm very glad you mention him. We shall see him here soon, depend upon it. I shall have him dropping in presently." And sure enough, in the space of two minutes, there enters a rosy reveller, who answers pat to that mythological designation. "I said so," cries Shivers; and well he might; for the new-comer was under engagement to call on the said Shivers that very evening, at that very hour. "Talk of the devil!"

It is noticeable that whether, on this "Talk of the devil," that personage appears, or disappears, the condition is supposed to be equally fulfilled. Tell Shivers that his rich acquaintance, old Bullion, one of the pillars of 'Change, had suddenly collected his stores and gone off somewhere, to the amazement of the city; and he assures you that he is not in the least surprised, that he expected to hear of something of that kind, for that he and Mrs. Shivers were talking of him at breakfast only the day before. You never could persuade him that the two events were not mysteriously connected; or that Bullion could have bolted if there had been no breakfast-table.

It is enough for the devil to appear elsewhere, if not here; and if there happened to be no talk of him to-day, it will do if a slight allusion to him last week could be established.

Mrs. Shivers differs from her husband, but equally confides in the mysterious connection proverbially existing between casual talk and predestined appearance. She is sure—quite sure—that if a thing is talked about, it must happen. Of course it will; it does, twenty times a day. The worst of this is, that in discovering it does,

she detects the most unfortunate analogies, and suggests the most cruel comparisons. Her nature, all politeness and good-humour, she is yet downright insulting, if something *à propos* is to be discussed. She was reading the other morning Coventry Patmore's fine description of the old ancestral ground—

> So wide, the rainbow wholly stands
> Within its lordly bound—

When in an instant she jumped up, dropped the book, and cried out as the door opened,

"Talking of the *rainbow*, here you all are in your *new dresses!*"

This was to her friends; her sensitive, scrupulous, high-bred friends, the Chickenham family; persons who actually expire in theory, and turn rather faint in fact, if any item of their dress is so unhappy as to attract notice.

"Talking of the rainbow, here you all are in your new dresses!" This to such especially nice people, such severe and studious artistes, conscious of the perfection of their taste, and believing that they could always, by its superiority, move about and prevent any vulgar eye from discerning what they had on! This, too, in the presence of the elder Miss Chickenham! That young lady's complexion was decidedly the most startling and fearful in its scarlet beauty; but a very considerable addition was made by the cheeks of the whole party to the brilliant flush of colour that suddenly illumined the boudoir of Mrs. Shivers.

And one night, just before supper, she sprang across the room, saying as she went, "Talking of *these things*, it always happens so, here is my lovely friend Mrs. Wix." She ran to embrace a very elegant little figure.

"It always happens so?" we said to each other, interrogatively, but only by looks. "These things" which had just been mentioned, were game and poultry,

and it turned out afterwards that Mrs. Wix was the daughter of a distinguished poulterer! That coincidence had flashed on the vigilant perceptions of Mrs. Shivers. The amiable creature was only conscious of "Talk of the devil." Her favourite idea was awakened, and her ruling propensity swallowed up all sense of propriety and delicacy towards a well-bred woman whom she really loved.

Worse remained behind. The conversation had turned upon one of those bankruptcies, the details of which, ripped open now and then to the wonder and disgust of an honourable and high-principled mercantile community, eclipse in profligacy the common annals of the Criminal Court; when a man of the strictest probity, who had recently made a pecuniary compromise that placed him not a hair's-breadth below the purest, entered the room. The giddy, thoughtless, kind-hearted lady, who would sympathise with the struggles of a fly with a large family, caught at her favourite coincidence; and though of course she did not cry, "Talk of the devil," a movement was made significant enough to have proved inexpressibly painful, if it had been more than momentary.

It is not often, however, that inconsiderateness in this matter is attended with such grave and perilous results. The awkwardness generally takes the comic turn, and the effect of a *mal-à-propos* allusion is simply farcical.

When a gentleman enters a rather quiet room wherein a few strangers and acquaintances are assembled, and overhears two ladies conferring, "Is it not curious that we should have been talking on that subject, just as Mr. X. Y. Z. was announced?" Mr. X. Y. Z., we may be sure, passes the rest of his evening in a very amusing and restless mystification. But the two ladies, were

only talking of tall people, and X. Y. Z. is tall. When, however, the previous topic is ugliness, and somebody the reverse of handsome appears; when the young lady whispers, "Did you ever?" and the elder one (for whom all good looks are fled, since they are not to be found in the mirror) lisps a little audibly, "Talk of the—hem!" the silliness acquires no slight dash of the impertinent.

Instances of physical deformity, of peculiarity at all events, say in the eyes or in the hair, are apt enough to suggest to these lively imaginations, images coincident with their conversational topics. A visiter with a very delicate optical cast, of which perhaps as a medium of tender humour, or some particular expressiveness, he is rather proud than otherwise, would possibly on his entrance, elicit from such a candid and inconsiderate soul as Mrs. Shivers, this: "My dear sir, how glad we are to see you, and how very, very odd that you should have arrived just at this moment; for would you believe it, we were all talking of that Mr.— *you* know his name!" mentioning an optical case familiar to everybody, and famous for its obliquity.

There is another set of persons to whom the proverb is of some conversational use. But these are of a different order. They have no faith in it, and employ it in no superstitious sense; but only for purposes more or less quizzical and jocose; never believing that Jones will ring the bell, merely because Jones is being talked of in kitchen, nursery, or parlour; and not at all concurring in the argument that the china bowl is to be broken, because Sarah remarked that it was older than herself, and had never got chipped.

But they have some half-serious, half-jesting fancies, and such are to be heard of in hundreds of families. They connect certain things, or places, with

certain persons and seasons. If they have some particular dish at dinner, or a combination of two unusual ones, they know that a particular relation, very unlikely to arrive else, will probably drop in and sit down with them. They are sure that if they pay an evening visit to such a house, it will rain desperately as they come back: unless Mary stops at home, in which case it will certainly be starlight. This they have noticed twenty times. Should their uncle James make one of his half-yearly calls, they look every moment for the arrival of two other guests whom they have not invited; because they always remark, that those two particular persons make their appearance accidentally, whenever "uncle" happens to be there. If they go to the Haymarket, they are confident that they shall see the ironmonger with black whiskers at the corner of their street, on the third row of the pit. They observe Mr. and Mrs. Baggs at church on the second Sunday of the month, and then they know that there will be a party in Granville-row on the Monday. Of fifty similar regulations they are similarly sure; but they do not, like excellent Mrs. Christian Smith, venture to swear by them. You find upon a little inquiry, that all these arrangements are, in their judgment, more likely to fall out so than not; and that they always happen sometimes.

With all such humourers of the joke, the remotest affinity will afford them the means of setting you wondering. Conversing the other night upon the Greek dramatists, one of the company, as the door opened, said in an expressive whisper, "Talk of the devil!" Who, we wondered silently, could the stranger be! A great scholar of course. Perhaps the grandson of the learned man who boasted that he was "*very near* having Sam. Johnson for his pupil." But there was no trace of scholarship in his conversation; and it turned out

that his association with the subject arose from his living in Greek-street, Soho! *That* was quite enough to remind the lady of Homer or Æschylus.

Some mischief-making jokers about town carry their playfulness a little further; and intentionally hoax you, without trouble and with perfect success, by the simple ejaculation, "Talk of the devil." This being muttered on a new arrival, the conversation is turned, no explanation is afforded, and no inquiry can take place; but it happens that although there is not a shadow of connection between the topic and the man, you never think of him afterwards without associating him with leather, or telescopes, or guano, or the new patent capsules, or whatever was the subject of conversation whimsically checked upon his entrance. You find your mistake out months afterwards, on apologising for discussing fire-engines, or what not, in *his* presence, who must understand the subject so much better!

A more serious illustration of the doctrine, that events unlooked for often follow mysteriously enough upon the casual mention of circumstances relating to them, may here be given in a little incident of domestic life, that needs no colouring whatever. To state it simply as it occurred, will be to give it sufficient impressiveness.

A father and mother mourned their only child. The boy died in his early spring; after the partial development of a character that raised unbounded hopes. His nature was noble and brave, but more than all, it was wonderfully sweet and loving. He was killed; perishing by a painful, though not lingering death. The father and mother mourned their lost son. It seemed as though no parents had mourned as they did, as though none had ever lost what they had. Months after, when

without anguish they could bear to see his image in a dream, and without violent agitation try to trace his soft but golden lineaments in the shadows of the evening sky, they communed in silent feeling, and felt that there was strength enough now in each other's eyes to look, if but for a blessed peaceful moment, upon the painted features of their boy; the portrait of his ripening youth, at which since the all-darkening moment, they had not dared to glance.

To a drawer, at which they had never looked but with tear-blinded eyes; which for months they had never passed without a sentiment of awe and extreme tenderness, and hearts beating more quickly; they now repaired together. They opened it with trembling, fond, and reverential hands, as if it were some sacred vessel. They felt as though it guarded some gift from God; as though something of their son was yet living mysteriously there. They opened it, and looked with eyes all love. It was a blank; empty. They drew it quite out, and searched. The treasure was not there. No word of terror, of wonder, was uttered: a low, faint murmur was barely audible: it was not a cry. They looked for an instant into each other's faces, and at the empty drawer. Then they opened the next; it was not there: and others; several in rapid succession: it was not there. No one had seen it, no one knew anything of it, no one had taken it. Then they looked again into each other's faces; and each, for the sake of the other, as though there were hope and comfort, turned to search once more among stores already ransacked, and in places where it was impossible for the missing object to be. The loss was bewildering, distracting. The relic was not there, it was not in any of them. They knew it was not; but they still looked, and looked, until all was utterly dark.

All consciousness of the mystery of this loss, all busy aching wonder, was absorbed in the sense of the loss itself. Surprise at once ceased; sorrow had no room for any other feeling. Their looks no longer asked how the holy relic had gone; but said only by their hollow gaze, that it was gone! Neither knew till now, how much of hope the heart had secretly drawn from the possession of this living resemblance of the being prematurely cut off. The bitterness of the disappointment, the dreary, hopeless blank, was in proportion. Nor is it easy perhaps for any one, who has not suffered to that sharp excess, to understand the inestimable value of such a memento. It was a dreadful moment when they became aware, how, months since, they had insensibly cherished the thought of having it under their pillow as they slept; and they knew not how doubly melancholy must be their sleep. They felt that the last stubborn heart-string had snapped.

But they never spoke of the loss after that wretched and desolate night. Each felt the shock, the drying up of the hidden source of comfort to which the heart had turned; but they could as soon have talked about the lost one himself. Thus, in continual communion of feeling, but never murmuring a word upon the one unforgotten subject, they lived on and on. In time they lived serenely, and learned to dry their eyes, even when alone.

They could at last feel interest and pleasure in the changing seasons, and could look with animation and the desire to participate, upon the active and healthy pursuits of life. When the summer-days were longest, those days were still not wearisome; and the winter-evening was often made luxurious by the charm of friendly visits. If not, the silent fire-side had its busy duties and its calm pleasures. So they lived; tranquil,

trusting, grateful; true to each other always, and to Him who kept them so.

But ever in the midst of all this, and throughout every season and condition of life, wherever their eyes might wander, whatever their thoughts might mingle with, active or meditative, in society or in solitude, the one fresh, subtle, conscious feeling, held undiminished empire over both hearts. There, amidst all, was the undying recollection; there in every change was the settled grief that had grown to be sweeter and dearer than happiness. At distant intervals of time, perhaps, a name, or some bygone event, would raise a fonder remembrance, accompanied by a few tender words, respecting their matchless boy; and then they would again be composed. The thought of him seemed to "let down the golden chain from high," and draw them towards him and heaven.

But of the lost portrait they never spoke. Whether it was that some undefined but superstitious apprehension mingled with their feelings of regret; whether it was reluctance to pain each other by a useless recurrence to a loss so irreparable, or to a circumstance so mysterious; but their lips never once opened upon that sad, strange, and frequently intruding subject.

Several years had passed, ten or eleven, and each succeeding one glided more smoothly away, obliterating not a line of the deep and dear recollection, but making each clearer and more enduring. When, one morning as they sat together, the father and mother, conversing upon common careless things, the usual household topics; with every object in its ordinary place around them, and no novel sight or sound to startle the mind out of its track, or disturb the habits of long years; suddenly, instantaneously there was a movement in the father's brain, a quickened beating of the heart, and a

sense of the necessity of giving utterance to a thought which had never found voice or expression before. It would not be controlled, and in a moment it broke the spell of years of silence, and escaped in words.

Taking his companion's hand, he said, abruptly, with a strange and somewhat wild air, in tones too that were strange.

"My beloved, how mysterious was the disappearance of that picture which has cost us both so many speechless pangs, so many fond and vain regrets! Reading each other's inmost thoughts, thus have we both reflected through long years, you and I; and what prompts me now to put the thought in words, I cannot tell!"

He said this like a child: he did not know why he spoke: he could not help it.

The mother raised his hand devoutly to her lips. Affected and surprised by his words, she sought fearingly in his countenance for some sign that his spirit was unusually troubled. But his brow was calm.

"The thought," she said, affectionately, "would have been less supportable if we had not felt and known how continually it was shared. Silence lulled it. It was hushed and well borne. But to hear it mentioned now at a far distant day, to find its existence certified by speech, and speech of yours, startles me as with the idea of something new; instead of the old, familiar, and not painful inmate of my spirit. What can have so moved you to-day to break the quiet compact which our souls so long since ratified?"

But this, as before, he was unable to tell. An impulse momentarily stirred in him, and in the glow and flutter of it he had spoken. They then, for the first time since the event, conversed upon the subject of their mysterious loss, giving expression to all their feelings, and their conviction that they had not displaced the portrait

themselves; comparing their sentiments respecting the inmates of the house at the time, the uninjured state of the drawer, which had been found locked, and all the strange, confounding circumstances of the case. All this discussed in placid conversation, as it had been in thought a thousand and a thousand times before, they both agreed that their useless wonder was now to express itself in words for the last time; and that with wonder, regret and anguish were also to be banished. They possessed a truer image of the lost one than art could render, and they blessed God.

An hour after, that father sat down in perfect composure to his writing-desk. It was an old friend, and had seen brighter days. At the side of it was a drawer of some depth, which he frequently opened to take out a particular seal that he required; but it opened easily only a little way, just sufficient to admit the hand. This, however, was enough, and as it had stuck fast apparently with age, no effort had ever been made to draw it out. But it so happened on this occasion that the seal had fallen, as it had never done before, into a cavity at the back of the desk, and it was now necessary to pull the drawer further out. In working it backward and forward to effect this, a short black ribbon presently became visible, and then more of it; and, now, the drawer being by a stronger effort forced completely out——

Powers of wonder! of delight and awe! what words shall give expression to the instantaneous and irresistible force with which ye seized upon the awakened and ravished soul of the gazer! The picture was *there!* the lost treasure was found!

That very drawer he had opened times out of number; his hand had been within it almost daily for years; yes, close to the now-recovered prize! the tangled

ribbon of which, set fast between the drawer's edge and the desk, at once prevented a further opening and held the miniature at the back. How flashed now upon the father's recollection that he had taken it, eleven years before, in his wretchedness and agony, from the old cabinet to his own desk, and thrust it hastily into that drawer, as some intruder came to witness the tears that were streaming over it. How wonderful was all this!

Where now was the mother's composure, when, entering, she beheld her husband's delighted, yet misbelieving looks! When she thought how often the light was actually penetrating the drawer, while its precious contents were still buried in darkness! When she remembered how very near the blind hand been to it hundreds of times! When she recollected above all, that this loss, which two hearts had so lamented, had never been the subject of one whisper between them for eleven years, until that very morn, just an hour before! The allusion to it, so sudden, strange, and final; the discovery so unexpected and momentary!

But how was all this forgotten by both, as they gazed together on the unfaded and expressive colours before them, picturing features almost as radiant and noble as the angel-face, which, with the gifted eyes of faith, they never failed to see, when they searched the heavens for it.

THE CITY OF THE VIRTUES.

VIEW THE FIRST.

"Virtue could see to do what Virtue would,
By her own radiant light——" . MILTON.

STOPPING, the other day, to admire, and also to moralise upon, that splendid Gothic edifice, with all its extensive and beautiful appurtenances, St. George's Catholic Church, which has lately risen, a striking monument of catholic spirit, on the Surrey side of the broken-backed bridge at Westminster, on a spot ingloriously known as St. George's-fields, the eye naturally wandered to the several other objects of interest congregated around it. Charity, it would appear, had made that once bare and melancholy district her head-quarters, her favourite home, her best cultivated domain.

In that region, acre after acre of ground is covered with buildings, some magnificent, others simple but befitting their object, erected for purposes of benevolence, dedicated to the noblest uses, maintained with unsparing liberality. Distinguished above all is Bethlehem Hospital, with its additional wings and well-kept grounds. At a distance, about equal to the space which the splendid hospital occupies, stands the Asylum for Female Orphans. Adjoining the grounds of Bethlehem, is the Refuge for the Houseless; opposite, stands the excellent Philanthropic Institution; at the corner, stretching from one road to another, along a frontage of considerable extent, is the beautiful new school for the indigent Blind; facing one wing of that elegant

structure, is an unassuming but useful Dispensary; at a small distance from the other wing, rises the noble pile of buildings recently completed by the British and Foreign School Society; and close by, humbler in their pretension, are St. George's School, and the Southwark Literary Institution. Within a stone's-throw, we reach the Magdalen Hospital; and the same space, not more, separates us from another benevolent establishment, the Freemason's Orphan Institution.

"St. George's-fields" may not, at first, sound very auspiciously. And yet, if desirous of impressing a foreigner with a sense of the pre-eminent dignity and grandeur of London,—though the Tower, and the Abbey, and the other sights are marvellous fine things, perhaps it might not be so injudicious to carry him into the uncelebrated vicinity of the new Catholic Church.

The reflection then ensued, "There is no ground in England of equal extent that yields such a harvest of benevolence. There is enough virtue around me to atone for half the vice of this iniquitous capital. Yet how often will the base and worthless, incapable even of a generous thought, affect to deride this angel-work as ostentation, and to stigmatise such charity as mere fashion, or the pride of purse. *Virtue is never rewarded!*"

Thus musing, as I stood by the rails of Bethlehem, perhaps it was that some power in the air, some subtle influence from the interior of that institution stole over my brain,—it is impossible to say,—but I began to perceive a change gathering around me; the scene ceased to retain its first forms and colours; London, in the space of a few seconds, was wholly lost to me, like a town in a dissolving view; and I was transported in secrecy and silence to the furthest possible point of the universe, to a place called "The City of the Virtues."

The first impression upon my mind, after looking around for a few moments in mute amazement, was, I must confess, not at all favourable. There was a visible propriety everywhere, that created a doubt whether I ought not at once to turn out my toes and get my hat brushed; and there was a general air of dullness, there 's no denying it, that rather made me wish myself back again in villanous London. But this presently wore off; there was so much to see, to inquire and think about, that there was no leisure to be dull; and as for my own observance of the proprieties, I quite forgot all about myself in the novelty of the objects around.

In this city, vices, follies, misfortunes, miseries, had place as they have elsewhere; but it was easy to see that there were fewer of them, and that the virtues so greatly predominated as to be extremely common. It was apparent, too, that there was considerable emulation, competition it was called, pervading all ranks of society; and it required great exertion in goodness, and a constant pressure upon the very loftiest sentiments of the mind, to keep pace with the growing desire on all sides to excel. Almost everybody was very good; but the amiable determination of each to be, by hook or by crook, better than his neighbour, was the first characteristic.

Delightful was it to look from street to street, and see the spacious city thickly studded with charitable institutions, all conducted upon the handsome principle of a total disregard to expense. At the various asylums for the destitute, the inmates were all clothed and fed according to usages prevalent in the station of life from which they had fallen. I noticed an example in the case of a very poor distressed fellow, who, having once been lord mayor, was allowed a tureen of turtle soup

for his supper. Some of these institutions, when their funds were low, added cold punch; which acted as a stimulant to flagging subscribers, and distanced rival establishments.

Bankruptcies were very frequent; but they were generally traced to an unbounded exercise of benevolence, to an instinct of kindness in the bankrupt, which had prompted him to undertake the support of the families of various deceased friends when incapable of maintaining his own. The good-natured practice, so easy to every man who has been taught to write, of putting his name to bills for the accommodation of his neighbour, was also generally followed; sometimes, as it appeared to me, under circumstances of doubtful correctness, the acceptor being honoured when the bill was not. But the act, when most severely judged, was necessarily brought within the large class of virtuous operations known as amiable weaknesses, and perfection is not to be expected everywhere.

It follows, from this, that good intentions, however likely to end in ill results, went a very great way in the City of the Virtues. Kindness of motive was pretty sure, in all social and domestic arrangements, to prove an excuse for mischief effected. When a citizen was totally unable to do what was required of him, a promise that he would not fail to do it on a certain day, given touchingly and impressively, so as to kindle an innocent delusion in the petitioner's mind, was held to cover all deficiencies, and to be an infallible sign of sympathy and good-will.

Although the promise was never fulfilled, the heart had done its work nobly; the hand only had failed, and for the emptiness, the powerlessness of that, the exalted impulses of its owner were of course not accountable.

The same species of virtue was everywhere shown in the desire of each man to praise, or, as in vicious cities it would be called, to puff his fellow man. If you hazarded an inquiry concerning somebody's character, truth had more tongues to exalt, than rumour, in a vicious city, could have had to depreciate him. He was "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;" and if he turned out to be fool or rogue, it was attributable to his innate love of liberty, that told him he was free to change his mind as often as he liked. If a housemaid was discharged for intolerable uncleanliness, her mistress, when people came to inquire respecting her qualities, found out that the girl had just one fault, and only one, an extravagant passion for soap.

Thus everybody gave everybody a good character, and all looked as if they deserved it. The evil was—and the whitest virtue may have a dark-complexioned progeny—that these good-natured representations led to as good-natured a reliance on them, and this, in its turn, to consequences not at all promotive of good-nature. But if it were an amiable weakness to assert, it was as amiable a weakness to believe, and so everybody acted up to a fiction which was as fair for one as for another.

This fiction was stark naked lying, no doubt; an extraordinary practice to find generally adopted in a city of virtue; but the good citizens called it by another name, and declared that Virtue was in herself so insufferably bright, that it was impossible she could help winking now and then. Although flattery, therefore, was in continual request, it would have been scouted under that name; it was called philanthropy, or the antidote to envy and slander. It must be frankly admitted here, that I had not been long among the virtuous before the idea occurred to me, that even depreciation might be a safer guide; for it is difficult to

deduct accurately from the account of flattery, but easy to strike off from the opposite account nine-tenths on the score of spite; if nine are not enough, say ten-tenths.

But it is time to advert to the principal peculiarity in the government of the City of the Virtues, the chief feature of its policy, its grand legislative distinction. This was, the law which remained continually in full force for giving Rewards to Virtue. There, as in other states, vice was punished; there, as is not the case in other states, virtue was rewarded. This is a novelty in morals that deserves particular attention.

I found that any great deal of virtue which could be clearly established in favour of a citizen was cognizable by the law, and rewardable accordingly. The statutes set forth the various degrees of amiability and heroism which were liable to specific degrees of encouragement. Thus, a citizen who had plunged into a caldron of boiling lead to rescue human life imperilled by an accidental fall into the same, was adjudged to have merited the honour of being supported for the rest of his life at the charge of the state. So, too, the virtuous man who should have become infected with the plague in his attempt to cure another, was entitled to the attendance of the state physician, and to have a palace allotted to him for his future residence.

For smaller achievements in virtue, appropriate encouragements were decreed. I stepped into the public court, and was witness to one or two judgments. A gaunt, hungry lad, who had given his scrap of dinner to a hale, ruddy veteran, whose dog had had nothing to eat that day, was, on the case being clearly proved, sentenced to three months residence in the mansion-house, the last week of the period to be attended with access to the wine-cellar. And an elderly lady, who

was proved to have always had her oysters scolloped, to avoid the barbarity of swallowing the innocents alive, was sentenced to eat a barrel of natives daily, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals presented her with a silver opener.

Virtue, of whatever order, was not its "own reward" in that city. On the contrary, it was extremely well paid, and always a valuable commodity. This was a condition of things not to be contemplated by a moralist without a passionate enthusiasm.

"Oh, virtuous community!" I cried, "how unselfish, how disinterested a view of humanity have you at length afforded to my eyes! Oh, laws! framed for the express reward of virtue, how unlike the laws under which I have been living! Oh, competition in benevolence and magnanimity! how unspeakably unlike the competition prevalent in the society I have left! Good, happy, glorious citizens, realisers of the perfectibility which has hitherto existed but in dreams, how ennobling and rapturous a sight to witness the profitableness of virtue, the high market-value of exalted sentiments, the benefits you disinterestedly heap upon yourselves by making sacrifices for others! Virtue at last makes a good thing of it, lolling in velvet, and crammed with venison!"

THE CITY OF THE VIRTUES.

VIEW THE SECOND.

THERE was something in the spectacle of Virtue rewarded by law that proved quite intoxicating, but in so exemplary a community, sobriety was not long absent; and then I began to be sensible of a few concomitant circumstances which considerably qualified my

raptures. I admired beyond measure the anxiety which every one evinced to do some good deed, but when it proved to be such a good morning's work, the admiration lessened, and the wonder grew more intelligible and familiar. When a good citizen, to shelter a large family burnt out over the way, admitted them all into his house, and went, with his wife, into lodgings, I was lost in delight to see people loving their neighbours better than themselves; but the sentence of the court, decreeing a handsome reward for this virtue, naturally diminished my enthusiasm. The kind soul (but perhaps he had never thought of this) had let his house for the season at a high rent.

A poor object, so reduced as to be in danger of perishing for want of seven and threepence, was accosted by a stranger, who, with tears in his eyes, instantly paid the money, and then gloriously added half a crown, making the mourner quite happy. It was a pleasant deed to do, and not expensive; for a lucky piece of charity of that kind entitled the performer to a guinea from government.

When there was some great act of virtue to be accomplished, something unusually handsome to be done, it made the soul swell with joyful pride to behold hundreds eager to do the deed at an enormous sacrifice; and what exultation was in the heart of the successful competitor, when he had all but ruined himself by his goodness! Yet the splendid recompense and the high public honour awarded when the case came to be heard in court, made the disinterestedness less dazzling, and threw a disagreeable light upon the emulation.

The people were generally very virtuous, but then—my own virtue is candour—there was little temptation to be otherwise. The vicious people, decidedly the minority, were the uneducated, the unenlightened!

they went blundering about in crime, could never get on, and barely made a living. The cleverer folks followed Virtue, who scattered "largess" liberally; and they, of course, made pretty pickings.

The system was at least open to this objection; that it could not always appear whether the well-doer was influenced more by the certainty of gain or the love of good, since the one always attended upon the other. Zeal for excellence, or for its reward, some would say, was, moreover, carried occasionally into extremes; and in the City of the Virtues, Master Blifil would certainly have been rewarded for letting Sophy's bird fly, on the principle that "everything had a right to liberty;" and the squire, if he had possessed an estate there, would have needed to look still more closely after those partridges to whose emancipation he was unvirtuously opposed.

Besides, the *quid-pro-quo* principle was more than carried out. A man never scrupled to lend five pounds very good-naturedly; but then he never hesitated to borrow, in the handsomest manner, ten. A gentleman declined to drag the destroyer of his domestic peace, the stainer of that honour which was dear to him as his own, into a court of law to wring vile lucre from him; but then there was another court, in which a large reward was decreed to brotherly forgiveness and Christian forbearance, under all such circumstances.

I was confirmed in the impression that many amongst the virtuous community were not perfect Howards, by the disappointment and vexation they plainly evinced when, in the course of a morning's rounds, they had met with no case of peculiar misery and distress. Not to find a fellow-creature pining in the last stage of suffering, reduced to utter anguish and despair, was to be

quite out of luck, and discontent was visible upon the countenance when such a dearth of calamities was mentioned.

Their feeling seemed to be exactly that of the apothecary in a remarkably healthy season, or of an attorney when litigation has taken leave of his part of the country for a term. But they became as merry as larks when they again met with a misery or two that they could relieve; and were as watchful for cases of real affliction as undertakers for future favours. Fire-engines are not more rapid on the road to a conflagration, than they were on the rush to a scene of calamity and devastation; but a suspicion certainly would steal in, that the scale of rewards had something to do with the zeal to outstrip and be foremost.

When troubles were scarce, and wrongs admitting of redress by the exercise of a noble generosity were not to be found, the exclamation of the virtuous Roman, "I have lost a day," was heard in a hundred places; but I could not help thinking, that it was uttered in a tone implying that everything was going out and nothing coming in. Virtue received no wages that day, having nothing on earth to do.

In very hard times, the performance of simple duties, such as sheltering a destitute parent, or taking a sick grandmother to the sea-side, was obliged to be furbished up into a virtue, and made as rewardable as possible. But in the higher ranks of the virtuous, this was held to be rather shabby and undignified, and was only resorted to by persons in straitened circumstances of morality.

As I looked on and mingled in free intercourse with the citizens, I grew less and less in love with the virtue that has always before it, not the prospect merely, but

the certainty of reward; and secretly felt assured that the old system, under which virtue was rarely rewarded but frequently punished, was after all more favourable to its growth and prosperity, its strength, its beauty, and its permanence.

It would be pleasant, I felt, to see some man of pre-eminent virtue disappointed of his reward; to see it withheld by law, stopped by a quibble. How would he act under the consciousness of having done good gratuitously? The wish was no sooner formed than, entering the Court of Reward, I became a witness of the very event.

It appeared that a man of virtue, thrice-tried and purified beyond all suspicion of alloy, had become accidentally cognizant of the desperate attempt of a burglar to break from prison. The felon was wedged between iron bars, jammed, choked, and almost cut in two, unable either to go back or get out. The good man could thrust him in, or drag him forth. He halted between justice and generosity; between a mere common duty, and an act of exalted virtue. The felon at that critical moment prayed for liberty—liberty to go in penitence, and receive, before he died, the blessing of an aged heart-broken father. The good man hastily weighed both sides of the case; the capture of the felon was the proper operation of the law, but the aiding in his escape, thus far advanced, was a heroism beyond the law—a justice more than legal. With a soft heart and a hard hand he dragged into freedom the repentant burglar, who broke that very night into the house of the judge who was to have tried him. But the virtuous deed was not therefore tarnished, although the brightness of the judge's tea-service and the beauty of his wife's jewel-case were gone. Justice, however, never

large-minded, like Generosity, confounded the two things, and peremptorily refused to concede to the good man the reward of virtue.

This being the posture of affairs, the court adjourned, and the cause was carried up, amidst great excitement, to the legislature (where the Virtues were sitting in general assembly), to be decided by a committee of the whole house.

Justice was in the chair (there was of course no Vice), and the case, with all the evidence on both sides, having been read at length, several of the Virtues rose at the same instant to speak to the question. From that moment, which was the beginning of the debate, the scene was one of such confusion, turbulence, and disorder, that to report the proceedings accurately is impossible. Better be in the house of—but no matter.

Meekness was the first to fall into a rage, and to swear loudly, on being called to order; this had nearly caused an adjournment. Charity began by fiercely impeaching the motives of the judge as grossly corrupt; and Amity, who had quarrelled with the judge's wife, laid to her the sole blame; the lady, she said, was influenced by Vanity, to whom the stolen trinkets really belonged. Honesty thought that an equitable adjustment might be come to, by selling the property stolen by the felon, and giving the money to his liberator. Economy could not see the absolute necessity for the reward at all, and suggested a large discount if it were given. Disinterestedness was convinced that the delay of the payment would be the ruin of their city, for who would ever think of practising the virtues if they were to get nothing by them! Temperance tried to articulate a few words, but being out of condition by reason of some mistake on the previous evening, failed; and

then Sympathy rose to declare, that all the parties in this suit were rightly served, and for her part she was glad of it. Peace suggested a motion for a new trial; and Conciliation trusted there would be no disposition to compromise the affair manifested on either side. Hope was quite *au désespoir* with respect to the whole business; and Faith could not see her way in the matter, for she could trust nobody. Mercy thought the felon ought to be hanged without trial. Pity protested that his deliverer deserved to be roasted at a slow fire; and Gratitude, though admitting that the judge had conferred lasting obligations on the State, abhorred the retrospective doctrine of taking past service into account, and voted that he should be cashiered.

To this effect (only the speakers were for the greater portion of the time all talking together) the proceedings were carried on; and the assembly broke up at last without settling anything. Hospitality having invited them all to luncheon (toast-and-water, with egg-sandwiches).

Though I could not boast of the honour of a very intimate acquaintance with many of these Virtues, yet some I knew well enough to avoid them. From such an ill-mannered and mercenary set, it was a relief to escape into the air; where, long before the shades of evening fell, I had seen and heard enough to convince me that the disciples were worthy of the divinities, and that if the Virtues had been devils they would have had an equal number of devotees for the same money. Whatever was "rewarded," the good amiable citizens would have zealously practised, from petty larceny up to high treason.

Oh! for a mail-train back to the old vicious city, where virtue is its own reward! Its fine, gay, bold-

faced villany does not always sicken, though it shocks one; above all, it never makes one despair: but the neighbourhood of these mercenaries and hypocrites, whose virtue is rewarded by law, is insufferably pernicious, and the caitiffs are as odious to taste as to morality!

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